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SUPERSTAR GOALIES

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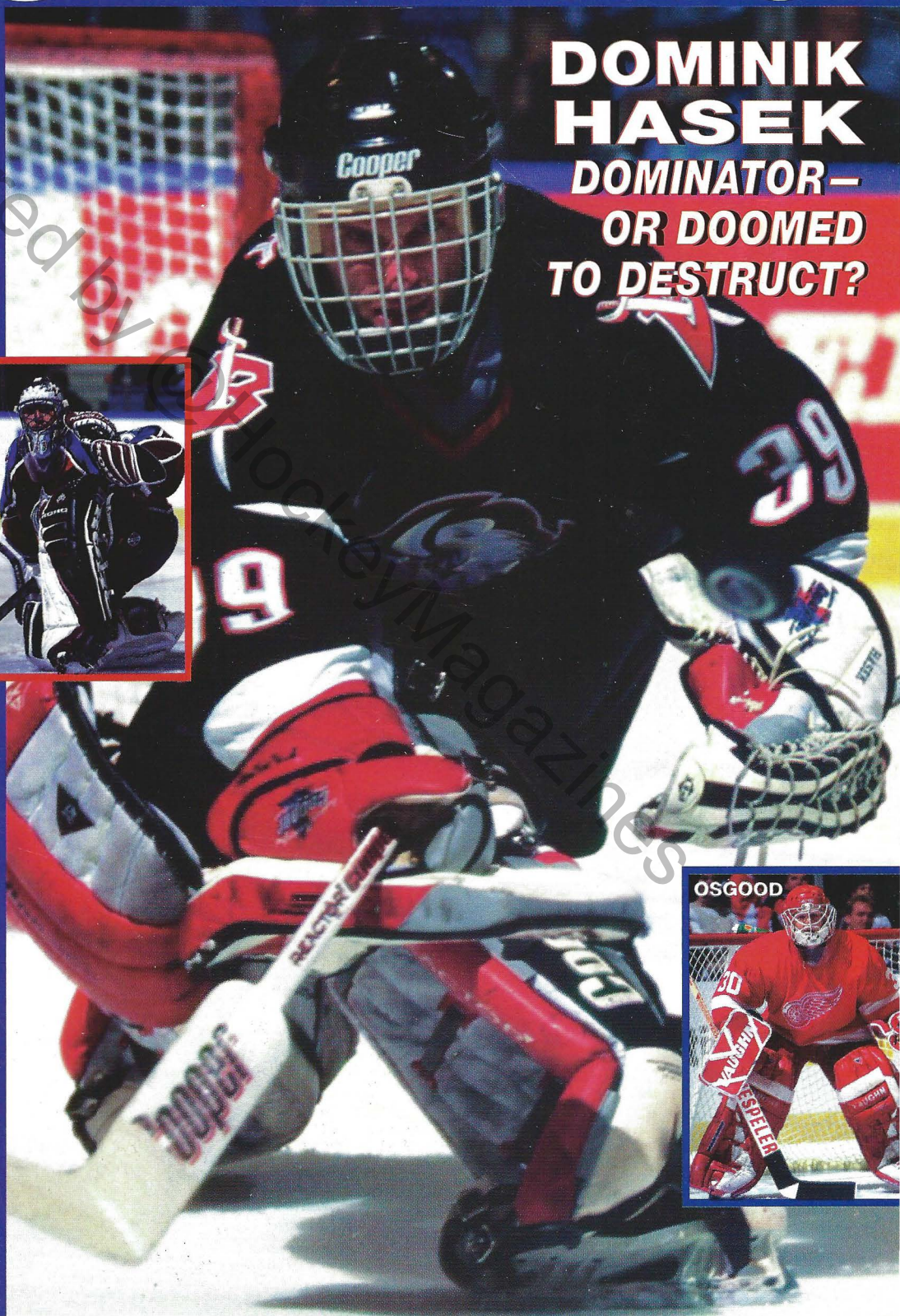
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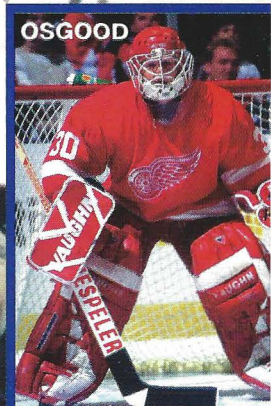
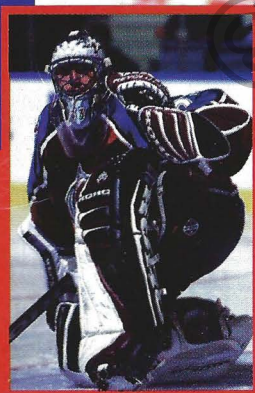
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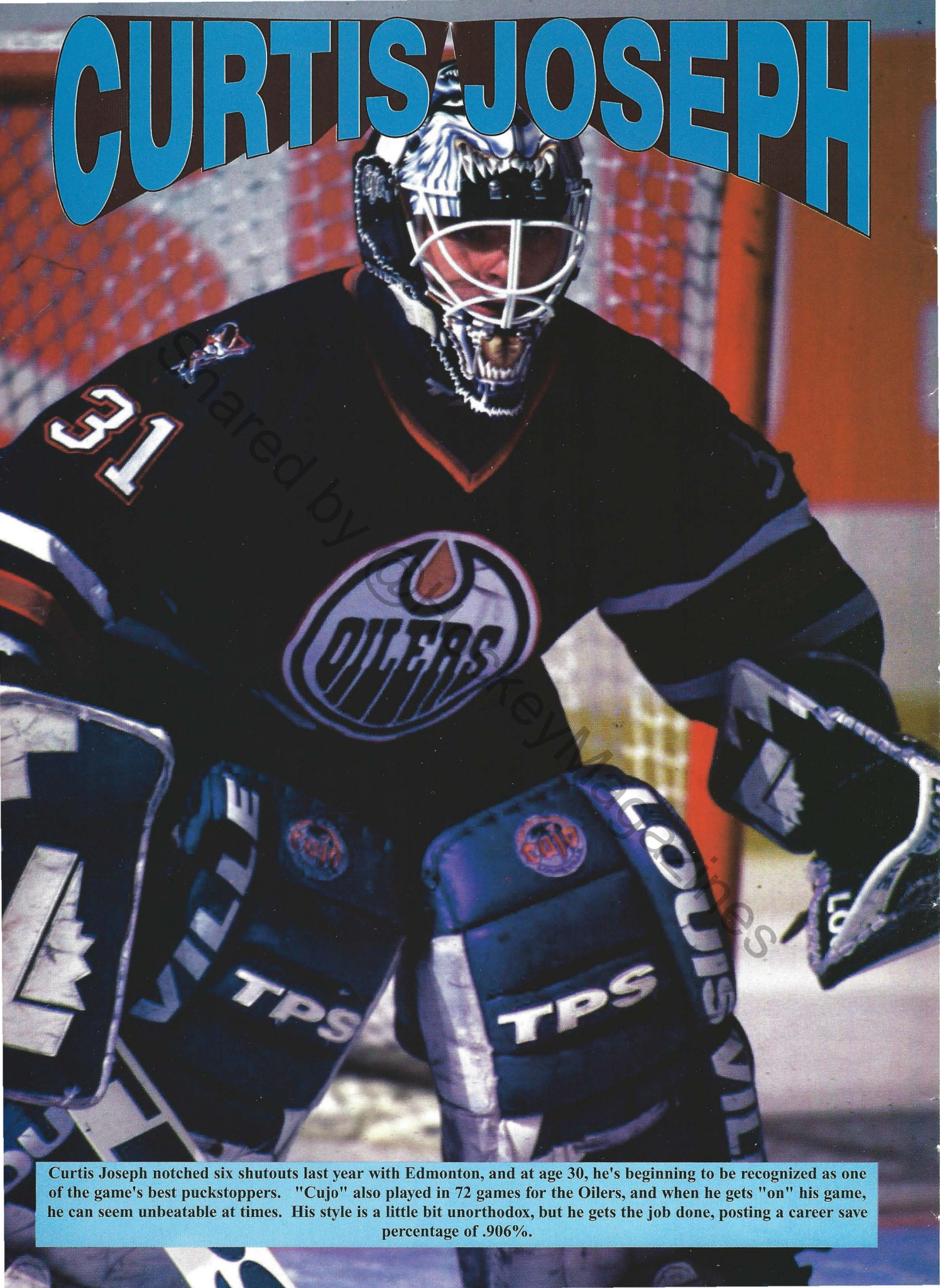
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**DOMINIK
HASEK
DOMINATOR—
OR DOOMED
TO DESTRUCT?**



CURTIS JOSEPH



Curtis Joseph notched six shutouts last year with Edmonton, and at age 30, he's beginning to be recognized as one of the game's best puckstoppers. "Cujo" also played in 72 games for the Oilers, and when he gets "on" his game, he can seem unbeatable at times. His style is a little bit unorthodox, but he gets the job done, posting a career save percentage of .906%.

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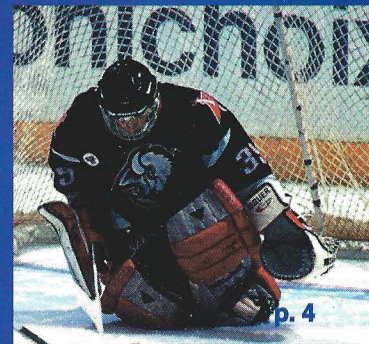
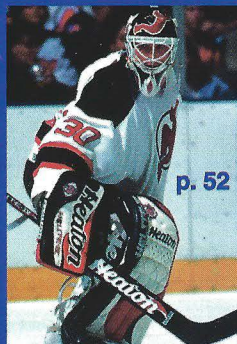
Editor's Note:

Welcome to the new sports kid on the block. Our Collector's Series will bring you the best fan's views and reviews of your top sports heroes.

Superstar Goalies is the first of our hot new hockey magazines; and we want your opinion about what you like or dislike. We'll feature colorful coverage and action shots of your favorite stars, but we need your feedback. Jump into the Your Call! contest, complete our Shout It Out! reader survey or voice your opinion in a letter.

And next month don't forget to look for *Hockey Shots* on your newsstand. More full-color poster size profiles, controversial articles, interactive features and contests—but on the goalies' arch enemy, the high-scoring heavy hitters!

Welcome aboard. Join us every issue, and make this outlet the print version of your favorite sports talk show!



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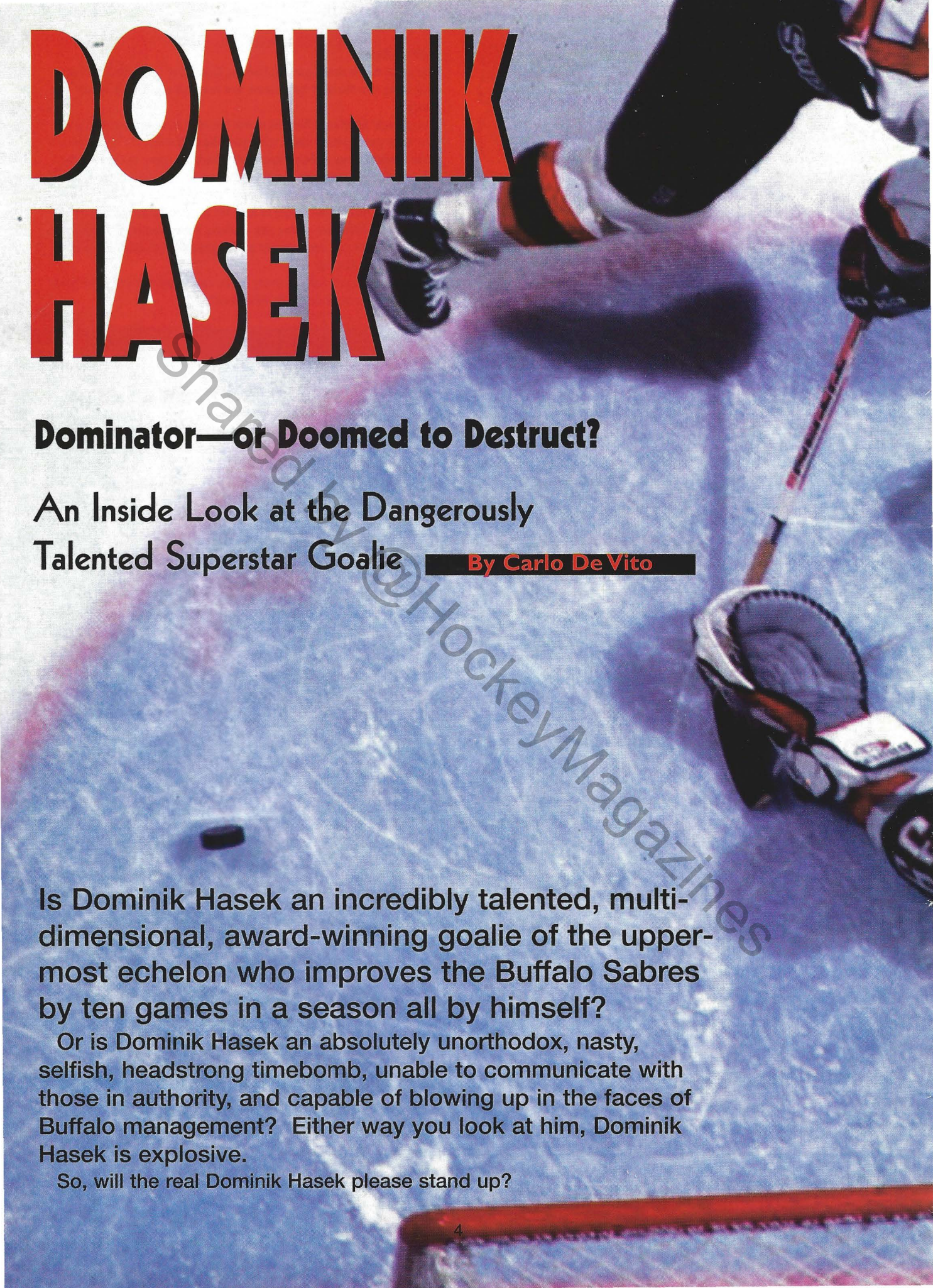
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DOMINIK HASEK



Dominator—or Doomed to Destruct?

An Inside Look at the Dangerously
Talented Superstar Goalie

By Carlo De Vito

Is Dominik Hasek an incredibly talented, multi-dimensional, award-winning goalie of the uppermost echelon who improves the Buffalo Sabres by ten games in a season all by himself?

Or is Dominik Hasek an absolutely unorthodox, nasty, selfish, headstrong timebomb, unable to communicate with those in authority, and capable of blowing up in the faces of Buffalo management? Either way you look at him, Dominik Hasek is explosive.

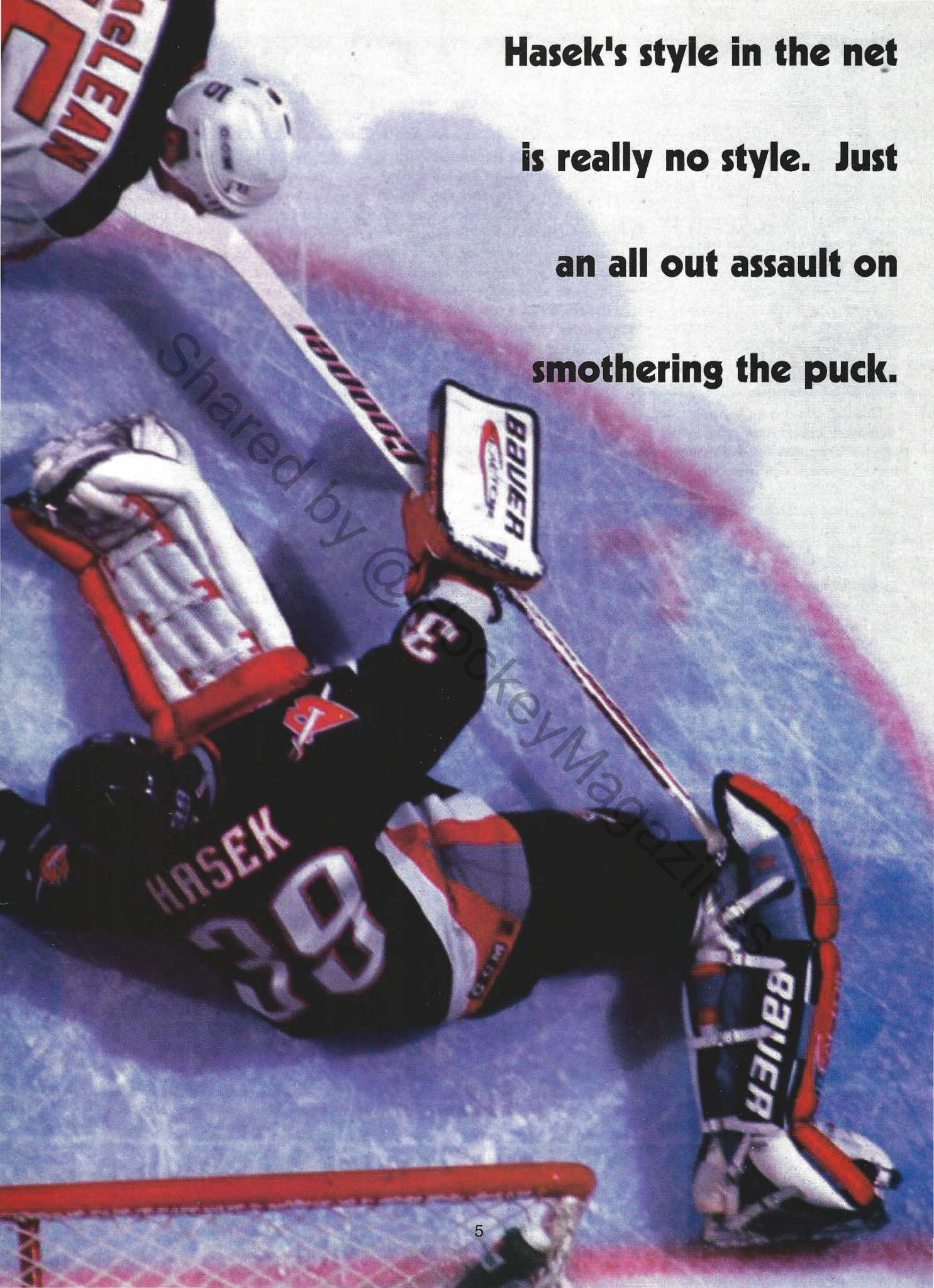
So, will the real Dominik Hasek please stand up?

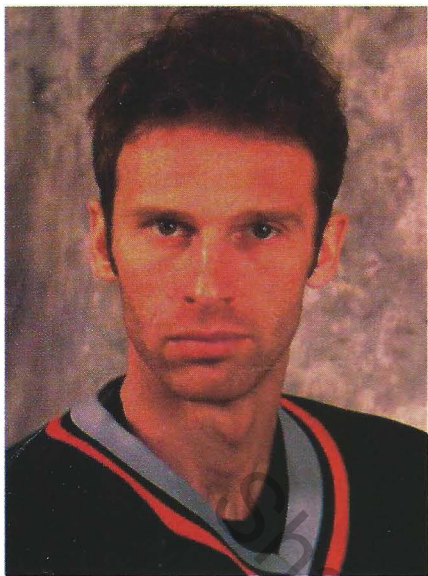
Hasek's style in the net

is really no style. Just

an all out assault on

smothering the puck.





This is a goalie who has alternately won every trophy or award a goalie (or any hockey player for that matter) can hope for. He is considered by many hockey aficionados as one of the most dominating puck-stoppers the rink has ever known. Lithe, fast, smart, attacking, Hasek can make or break a game all by himself. He has inspired such loyalty in some fans that he has several websites on the World Wide Web dedicated to him by rabid Sabres followers.

Unfortunately for Buffalo Sabres fans, however, Dominik Hasek is also highly unpredictable. Some critics say that he sits too far back in the net. That he has the most unorthodox style of any goalie in the NHL, flailing on the ice like a child throwing a fit or flopping around like a fish out of water. His detractors, of which there are currently many, say that he is a self-absorbed star, concerned only with his own stats, who quits on his team, who can't handle pressure, and who has been prone to injuries his entire career. And lately, it has been apparent that not only is he prone to temper tantrums (aimed at anyone, from the media to his coaches and even his fellow players), but that he may have figured prominently in the decimation of the Sabres's front office, including the firing of the GM John Muckler and coach Ted Nolan.

It was no surprise that, despite everything Hasek accomplished on the ice last season, the Hart Trophy winner for league MVP was lustily booed during the preseason by the hometown faithful.

Age 32	HT 5-11	WT 165	Catches L	Seasons 7				
	GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA
96-97	67	37-20-10	4037	153	2177	.930	5	2.27
Career	278	132-98-35	15866	635	8187	.922	20	2.40

A Force To Be Reckoned With

Despite the loss of Pat LaFontaine to the geriatric New York Rangers, many experts think that Hasek, if he can stay injury-free, can lead this team to a possible first place finish. That's a problem for a team with no bonafide offensive star to keep the frozen cowchip at the other end, and a defense which has been, in short, overwhelmed. He definitely has the ability to take his team almost singlehandedly anywhere he wants. The only question is this: Does he have the guts for it?

In the 1996-97 playoffs, Hasek suffered a minor knee sprain, then got into a fight with a local beat writer when the scribe intimated that Hasek was not as injured as he claimed, and that Hasek's real motivation was to avoid losing in the playoffs after a great personal season. The writer said that Hasek was letting down his team and the fans. Hasek responded by roughing the reporter up and tearing his clothing. He was then suspended by Commissioner Gary Bettman. In the end, the Philadelphia Flyers wiped the Sabres off the ice, while Hasek sat on the bench, unable to cauterize the hemorrhaging defense.

When the Sabres management decided to build a team, they were going to do so around their two biggest stars, Pat LaFontaine and Dominik Hasek. But Hasek is known as a surly type, who leads by example only. The real club house leader was LaFontaine. Now that the former Sabres star has moved to the downstate Rangers, Hasek is all alone in the leader's seat. This should prove to be another challenge in the career of the fiery 32 year old netminder. If he is unable to keep his composure this season both on and off the ice, many insiders feel he will undoubtedly cost the Sabres at least first place, if not a playoff spot.

Who Is The Dominator?

Dominik Hasek was born in Pardubice, Czechoslovakia, on January 29, 1965. He played eight seasons in Pardubice, and was voted goaltender of the year from 1986 to 1990, and best player in that nation in 1987, 1989 and 1990. He led the Czechoslovakian team in the 1991 Canada Cup and was drafted by the Chicago Blackhawks in the tenth round of the 1983 NHL entry draft as the 199th pick overall.

The first glimpses of his unpre-



Hasek stops Richer at point-blank range.

dictability surfaced soon afterward. It has been alleged that the

Blackhawks traded their under-achieving star to the Sabres on August 7, 1992 because he was headstrong and openly disregarded management. At the Blackhawks' minor-league team in Indianapolis, he had a record of 20-11-1 and played in five NHL games during the 1990-91 season. In 1992 he found more playing time with the big league club as his record went to 10-4-1. Hasek was widely acknowledged as an up-and-comer, but despite his success, Chicago thought they were unloading a problem child when they traded him for Stephane Beauregard and a player to be named later (Eric Daze).

In his first full year in the NHL, Hasek played in 28 Sabre games and posted an 11-10-4 record. But the next season proved to be his break-out year. The 1993-94 season saw Hasek perfect his grotesque, spasmodic, belly-flop style, as the southpaw put up some very gawdy numbers. Putting his stick flat down on the ice, and sometimes falling to his knees long before an opposing player pulled his stick back to fire, Hasek sacrificed every part of his body in an attempt to block every shot. As silly and unprofessional as it looked, he notched seven shutouts and 30 victories, and lay claim to the NHL's best goaltender honor, the Vezina Trophy. He did all this while maintaining a 1.95 goals against average. In that same year, he also picked up the team's MVP and Most Popular Player trophies.

Hasek went on in the 1994-95 season to notch a 19-14-7 record. A tribute to his abilities was the fact that he won the Vezina Trophy yet again in 1994-95 while posting a none-too-impressive win-loss record of 19-14-7. However, in 41 games, Hasek allowed just 85 pucks past him, producing a goals against average of just 2.11, with 5 shutouts and a .930% save percentage.

He couldn't repeat such success the following season, and 1995-96 saw Hasek's goals against average balloon to 2.83. In fairness to Hasek, however, the Sabres were a weaker team that did not give the cagey goaltender much support defensively.



Some have called Dominik Hasek "heartless" for abandoning his team in last year's playoffs.

Success And Trouble

Hasek came back and had a stellar career year in 1996-1997. He played in 67 games and by now, everyone was aware of the kinds of numbers he was putting up. By the end of last season, he compiled a 37-20-10 record, with 5 shutouts, a 2.27 goals against average and a remarkable .930% save percentage. Not only did he walk away with the Vezina Trophy for the third time, but he also won the coveted Hart Trophy, the NHL's MVP award.

Despite his meager physical stature (5'11", 168 pounds) Hasek's presence on the ice can inspire a team as well as an arena. But success breeds contempt, and soon the kudos for Hasek were hard for some of his teammates to take. Sabres center Derek Plante told a Buffalo News correspondent in a

March 1997 interview: "We've been called a one-man team because of Dominik Hasek, but it's really more a 20 man team. . . he's won some games by himself for us. But it's been a team effort."

That was about as openly hostile as one could get when referring to Hasek in the press. But the wheels in Buffalo were just starting to come off. The craggy-faced Czech with the Don Johnson stubble tried to redress some of the fans' ardor and his teammates' grumbling. Still, his ego seemed to get the better of him.

Speaking to another reporter a month after the Plante interview, Hasek said, "We play what's good for our team, but there's more chances and shots against me." He also went on to say, "I've never played with such a hard-working



team. It was a great season."

In that same interview, Hasek ended with a quote which really set the whole playoffs apart for the Sabres. "There is pressure on every goaltender at this time of the year," Hasek said. "One mistake can make a difference in a whole series. There's pressure on everyone, but it's nothing that bothers me."

Apparently, That Wasn't The Case.

That week, Buffalo sportswriter Jim Kelly had a different point of view. Kelly wrote in a sports op-ed piece that Hasek seemed to be caving into the pressure and might not be as seriously hurt as he was saying. (Hasek had his knee lock on him in net during the third game of the opening playoff series with Ottawa.) Kelly also pointed out a series of incidents, all of which seemed to indicate a serious rift with coach Nolan.

Three nights after his interview, The Dominator was dominating again, except this time his "goal" was to shut out Kelly. After a 4-1 playoff loss to the Senators, Hasek spat at Kelly's feet and then rushed him. The shocked Kelly was roughed up and had his clothes torn before he could be separated from the enraged goaltender.

That incident cost Hasek a three-game suspension. He ultimately apologized publicly to Kelly, and unnamed sources within the organization alleged

that team officials were worried about Hasek's "mental state." A week later, Hasek still considered himself injured. As the Sabres faced elimination against the Philadelphia Flyers, all the local papers were wondering if Hasek might come to the rescue.

And indeed, two days before the game, Hasek told the Associated Press, "I don't feel any problem. I can do all the butterfly moves with my pads and go up and down, so I feel I am ready to play tomorrow." Instead, Hasek was a scratch from the lineup, and backup goalie Steve Shields led the Sabres to a victory over the Flyers. Philadelphia went on to win the series and Hasek never came back to net.

Despite all of The Dominator's accomplishments last year, the lessons learned were not wasted on the new management. On July 8, 1997, a very real message was sent to Mr. Hasek, via the NHL draft. Even though the Sabres were in desperate need for an enforcing defensive specialist and a scorer, the organization drafted a Finnish goalie, Mika Noronen with their first pick. This was especially interesting when, by all accounts, Hasek's backup last year, Steve Shields played very well. Apparently, the new management is not taking any chances with the unpredictable Dominator.

The Sound And The Fury

It's not only the fans who are some-

The Dominator made no bones about his lack of love for the popular but ultimately fired coach Ted Nolan.

what worried about The Dominator. His teammates are allegedly leery of him for deserting them in last year's playoffs, and for making clear his lack of respect for coach Nolan, who was fired soon after Hasek's comments reached the public. Nolan was well liked by everyone except Hasek, and new coach Lindy Ruff certainly has his hands full in Buffalo with the controversial goaltender and the loss of Pat LaFontaine.

Still, Hasek may just rise again to the challenge. He has played more minutes than almost any other goalie in the last two years, and those minutes aren't about to diminish, barring an injury.

The question remains: Which Dominik Hasek will show up come playoff time? The Dominator, who has unquestionably been one of the best goalies of the 1990s, or the overwhelmed, injured, flailing, spitting, high-priced superstar (aka cry baby) who has been flirting with the label "heartless" after last year's playoff fiasco? With all the off-season changes in Buffalo, Hasek's numbers could get ugly, and then the real Dominik Hasek will be forced to reveal himself.

ACROBATS IN GOAL



Jeff Hackett sprawls and saves one against Zubrus.

Fitzpatrick makes a beautiful kick save.



Tommy Salo takes a dive to stop the puck.

Ranford does the splits to stop Leetch in front.



MIKE RICHTER

The Stand-up Goalie Extraordinaire Is at His Best in the Big Games

With the departure of Mark Messier and the presence of Wayne Gretzky, it is easy to see why Mike Richter tends to drift into the background in the New York Rangers ongoing dramatics. However, the 31 year old goaltender is known for producing his own form of drama between the pipes, saving his best performances for the games that matter most.

Last year's playoffs against the New Jersey Devils was a prime example. Richter posted a 0.77 goals-against average, with 178 saves in 182 shots in the Eastern Conference semifinals, outplaying his cross-river rival, Martin Brodeur, as the Rangers trounced the Devils in five games.

Age 31	HT 5-11	WT 182	Catches L	Seasons 8				
	GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA
96-97	61	33-22-6	3598	161	1945	.917	4	2.68
Career	352	182-113-34	20016	978	10271	.905	18	2.93

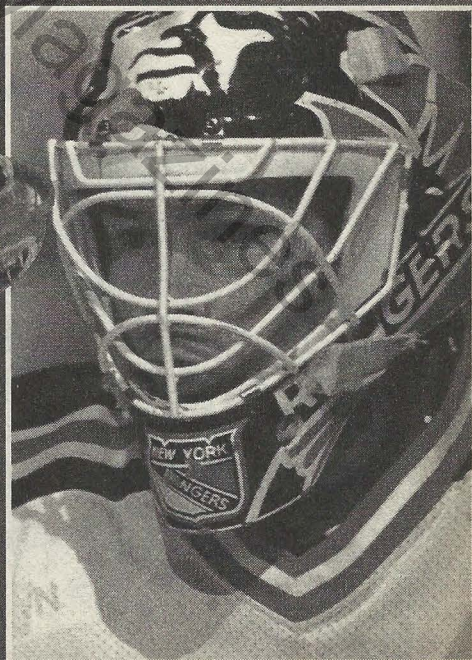
At 5'10" and 182 pounds, Richter is one of the most acrobatic goalies in the NHL. A classic stand-up technician, he is extremely adept at playing angles, and when he does go down, he's back on his feet very quickly. Opposing players have commented that Richter may have the best lateral movement in the league.

But Mike Richter is not one to let an off-season go by without attempting to improve on weaknesses. He's focused on defending against long shots, as well as cutting down on the number of rebounds to limit second chance

goals. He's also trying to become a better stickhandler.

However, the Rangers would be more than happy to see Richter have another like last year, when he posted a 2.68 GAA, and notched 4 shutouts in the regular season.

But the cagey Ranger netminder clearly saved his best for last, posting 3 shutouts in 15 postseason games. Only the explosive offense of the Philadelphia Flyers prevented Richter from leading the Rangers to another Stanley Cup series.



Mike Richter can be acrobatic and exciting at times, and he may have the best lateral movement in the NHL.



DEAD &

Ron Hextall and Garth

Ron Hextall is capable of making incredible saves, then letting the easiest shot slip between his pads for a goal.



By Carlo De Vito

If Philadelphia is the city of brotherly love, then the Menendez brothers could easily like it here. Anybody who knows this town will tell you it's tough. One Thanksgiving Day Parade in Philly, they even booed Santa Claus. But they mostly prefer to boo their sports franchises, and no team draws the ire of its city than the Philadelphia Flyers.

Like most fans in the Northeast, Pennsylvanians like things that are smashmouth. They like tough baseball players (remember Pete "Charlie Hustle" Rose and Mike Schmidt?), they like tough football players (remember Chuck Bednarik?) and they love tough hockey players. This is the town that invented tough hockey (remember the Broad Street Bullies?).

If you understand the culture, and you understand Philadelphia hockey, then you can begin to understand how unhappy these brotherly-types are towards their two goalies, Ron Hextall and Garth Snow. As far as fans last year were concerned, these two journeymen were the scapegoats for a pathetic showing by the Flyers, their team captain Eric Lindros, and his band of utterly outclassed and confused teammates.

During the regular season and playoffs last year, the Flyers truly resembled the "Legion of Doom," crushing opponents and their Stanley Cup dreams with a vengeance. But as soon as Lindros and company got punched in the nose by Detroit in the Stanley

BUZZED

Snow: GOALIE GOATS

Cup finals, fans and the press had to have a focus for the blame.

Enter Hextall and Snow. It wasn't enough that the entire Detroit series was played at the Flyers' end of the ice. It wasn't enough that winger John LeClair spent more time fighting than showing the offensive form that enabled him to score 50 goals for Philadelphia during the season. And it wasn't enough that Paul Coffey, the highest scoring and assist defenseman

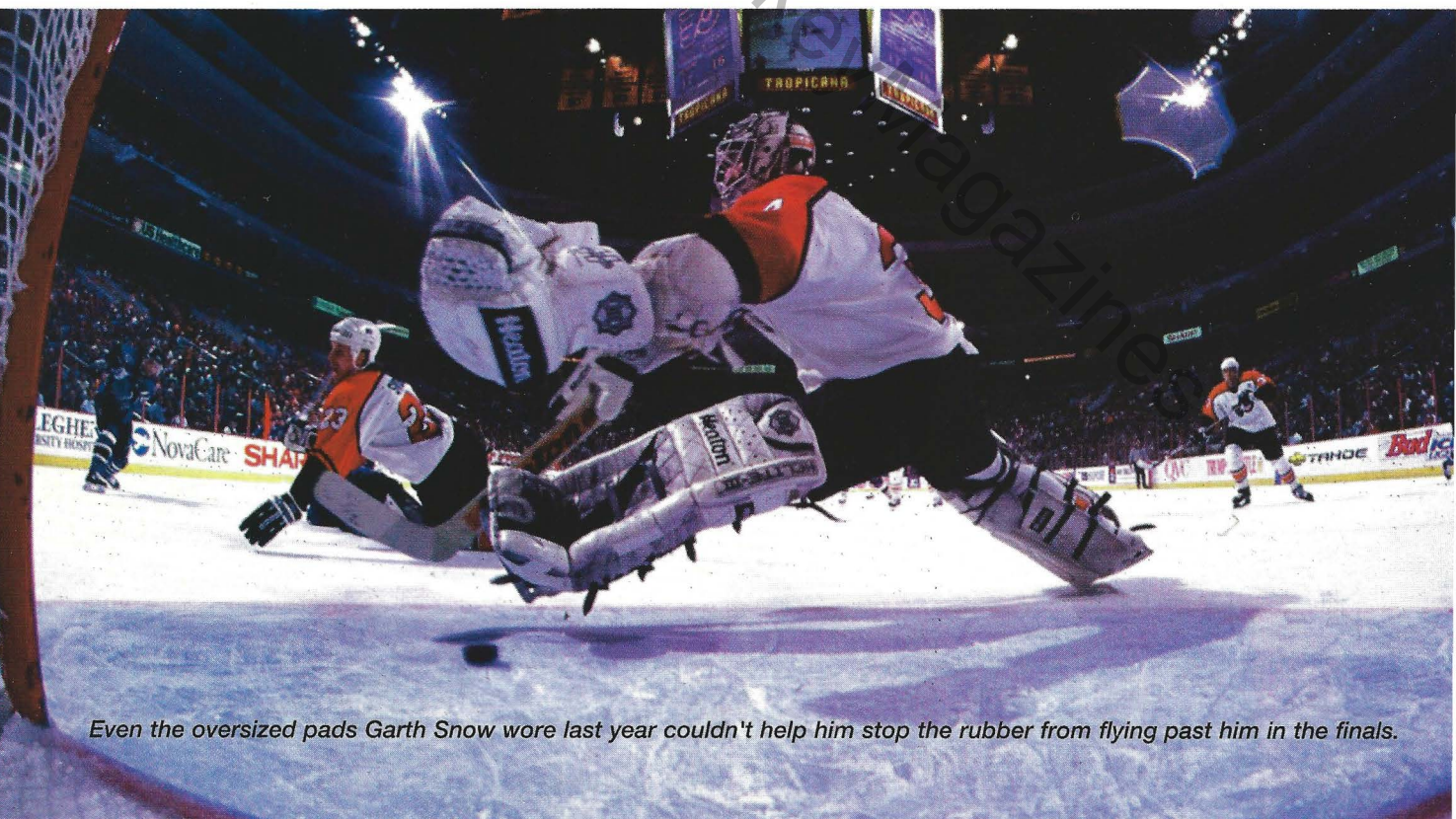
in NHL history, was nowhere to be found in the Cup finals.

No, Philadelphia fans wanted a body or two, so they decided to hang the goalies.

After all, this is the city that virtually ran Phillies pitcher Mitch Williams right out of baseball when he folded in the World Series a few years ago. Williams received so much abuse at the hands of irate fans, he had to sell his house and leave the state.

The truth is, the Flyers were more than just outplayed by Detroit in the 1997 Stanley Cup Finals. They were intimidated. Their usually potent offense was outskated and their defense was swarmed. As a result, two usually solid goalies were faced with the fight of their lives. And they responded like the rest of their team. They cracked too.

Deja Vu All Over Again



Even the oversized pads Garth Snow wore last year couldn't help him stop the rubber from flying past him in the finals.

Ron Hextall and Philadelphia go together like Cain and Abel. Unfortunately for Hextall, he keeps playing Abel. As for Philadelphians, they have to be wondering, "How many times can we bury this guy before he stays dead?"

Hextall was drafted by Philadelphia in 1982 in the sixth round (picked 119 overall), and has become entwined with the team for 10 of his 12 years in the league. Every lost chance for Lord Stanley's Cup, every slipped opportunity, rightfully or not, is tied to Hextall. And how unfair it must all seem to him. Hextall is one of the winningest goalies in the franchise's history, but he took the fall for two separate Flyers losses in the Cup Finals in two different decades!

In 1987, Hextall was considered by many Flyers fans as the second coming. (Bobby Clarke was the first, of course.) Not only did Hextall win his

Ron Hextall	Age 33	HT 6-3	WT 192	Catches L	Seasons 11			
	GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA
96-97	55	31-16-5	3094	132	1285	.897	5	2.56
Career	539	265-190-58	30827	1574	14812	.894	19	3.06

own team's MVP award, he won the Conn Smythe Trophy as the playoffs' MVP as well as the Vezina Trophy for the league's best goaltender. In short, Hextall was amazing. He would flaunt his confidence, coming way out of the net to stop goals and challenge shooters. He made the net seem like a black hole. An opposing player would strike ferociously, and Hextall would stand tall, all 6'3" and 200 pounds of him, looking like some kind of Grizzly bear, roaring and practically eating the puck like a snack. But Hextall couldn't bring the Cup to Philadelphia that year.

Oh, how Hextall loved to hit and slash. Players literally feared being

near the crease, and he was one of the most penalized goalies in the league. However, for all his bravado, the mid 90s became a little crueler to Hextall, and the chinks in his armor began to show. Consistency became a major problem, and it soon became apparent that there were two Ron Hextalls who could show up for a game. The great one, and "The Other Hextall."

The other Hextall was a goofy, tall, uncoordinated clod, who fell to his knees too soon when an opposing player aimed ankle high. He seemed to have trouble bending over at times, and his reputation was even further damaged last year when Toronto's Felix



Hextall has had trouble with consistency throughout his career.

Garth Snow	Age 28	HT 6-3	WT 200	Catches L	Seasons 4			
GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA	
96-97	35	14-8-8	1884	79	816	.903	2	2.52
Career	68	30-19-12	3719	175	1654	.894	2	2.82

Potvin beat him to a pulp.

And, then, of course, there were the silly shots. While it was not at all unlikely to see Hextall make impossible save after impossible save, it was also not uncommon for Hextall to let pass some insanely easy shot that any gnarled Philadelphia fishwife could have stopped herself. Some wild slapshot from the blue line, or a painfully slow tap-in. The more obvious the shot seemed, the harder it was for him to stop.

Two For The Road

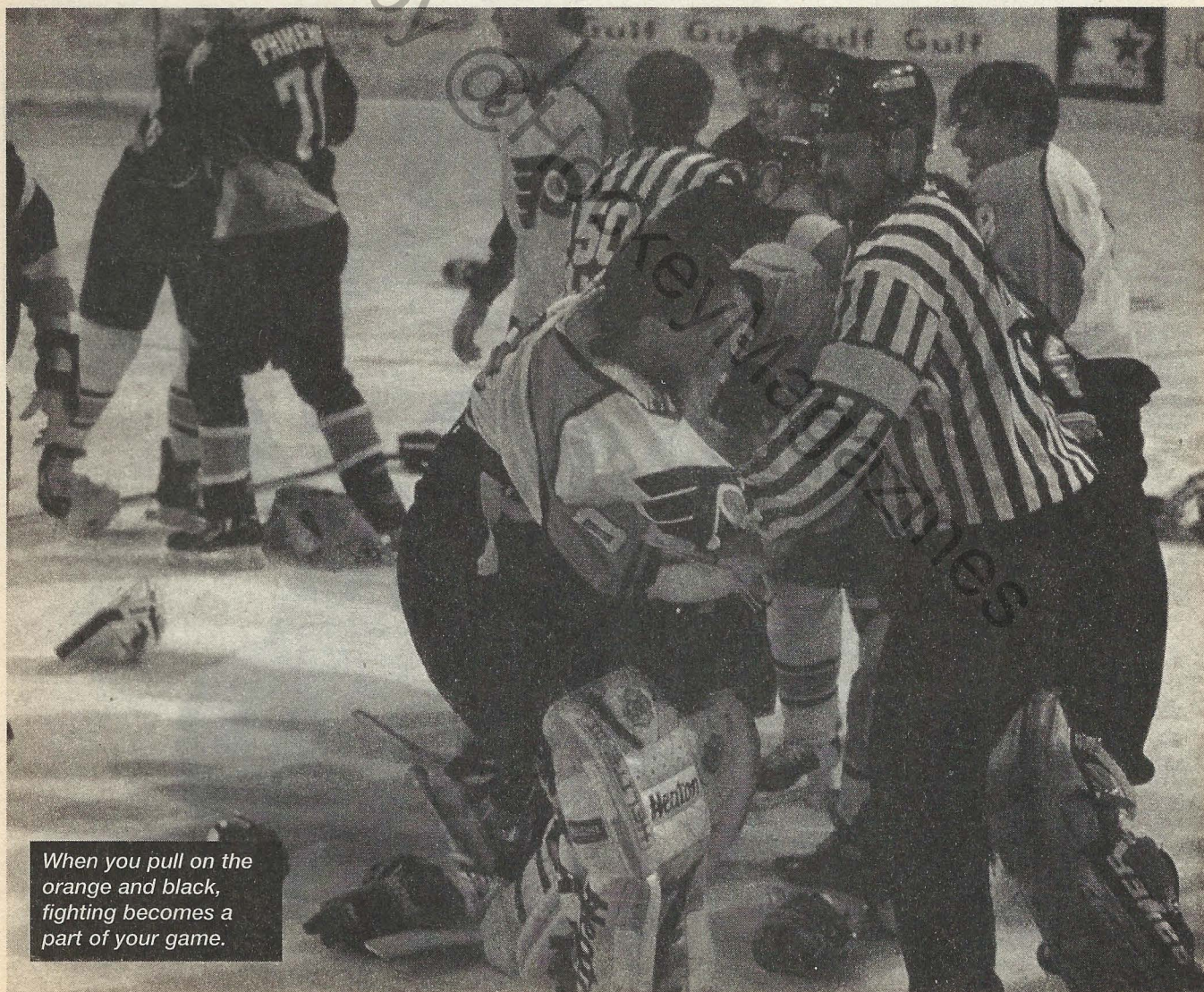
Garth Snow was one of the 1996-1997 season's biggest stories. Great goaltending? Not really. Garth was solid.

He needed, and still needs, a bit more polish to make it in the league. What gave him notoriety were his shoulder pads. He wore modified lacrosse pads that sat up high and made him look a whole lot bigger than he really is. His wearing the pads remained a direct challenge to the NHL, and many hockey fans were waiting for some kind of ruling to come down from league officials before the Stanley Cup Finals had ended. It never happened—until long after season's end.

Had he had more success during the season, or in the playoffs, teams might have done more than grumble, but Snow proved young and vulnerable, and it didn't appear that the pads were

helping him all that much. In only his third year, Garth scratched out 14 wins, 8 losses and 8 ties last year. He had a respectable 12-game unbeaten streak and it appeared that he might be able to ease into the No. 1 goalie slot. But on a team as offensively strong as the Flyers, Snow's save percentage of .903 was not deemed overly impressive.

Once the playoffs arrived, Hextall and Snow played competently, as most of the attention centered on the scoring threats of Lindros and LeClair. But in the finals, both goaltenders were overwhelmed. As if Hextall and Snow didn't have enough to worry about from opposing teams, Flyers coach Terry Murray (now former Flyers coach) was not a very inspiring man. He played head games all season long with his netminders, and when he had to rely on them in the playoffs, he had two shattered goalies with no confidence.



When you pull on the orange and black, fighting becomes a part of your game.

Late in the playoffs and then in the finals, Murray switched his goalies back and forth, pulling one while building up the other, then yanking them indiscriminately, no matter how a goal was scored. He didn't trust Hextall, and Snow was too inexperienced for his liking. Things got so ridiculous at one point, Murray pointed out, "One of the questions I was asked last night by a media person was, 'Do you think Garth Snow let in that long goal because he is such close friends with Hexy he wanted Hexy back in the net?' How absurd is this getting?"

It got worse, especially for Murray. It had been rumored that the coach was gone the next season whether he won the Cup or not. Those rumors proved to be true, and the man who guided the Flyers to the Stanley Cup finals was fired.

Goaltending-wise, all the wheels seem to have fallen off the Flyers' Zamboni. Eventually, the NHL banned Snow's pads, saying they were

unsportsmanlike. A week before the season started, the NHL issued a statement. In it, Brian Burke, an NHL executive, pointed to Rule 21: "With the exception of skates and stick, all equipment worn by a goalkeeper must be constructed solely for the purpose of protecting the head or body, and he must not wear any garment or use any contrivance which would give him undue assistance in keeping goal."

Burke went on to say, "Anything beyond that is clearly meant to stop the puck and has to be prohibited."

The Road To Nowhere

Every hockey writer on the North American continent assured readers and insisted that the only things standing between the Flyers and the Stanley Cup were Snow and Hextall. And there were enough rumors to ring a deaf man's ears about how either one or the other would be gone, long before the season started.

However, GM Bobby Clarke was adamant that the Flyers were not going to find any free agent goalies better than the team of Hextall and Snow, and even new coach Wayne Cashman seemed to echo Clarke's thinking when he told the Associated Press on September 30th, "Why did the Flyers go to the Finals last year? They got there because they got great goaltending. If you take away the finals, would people be talking about it?"

Hextall himself said, "There was a lot of emphasis on the goaltending, but we got beat everywhere. Special teams and even strength. I know a lot of people wonder: Can he bounce back? I've done it before, and I know I can do it again."

And when Ron Hextall swears he can "do it again," Flyers fans everywhere start clearing their throats for another postseason of booing.



Hextall will try again to bring the cup to Philadelphia.

How Well Do You Know Your Goalies?

Take this trivia quiz and find out just how much you know about Superstar Goalies past and present. After you've answered, see if you've made the grade!

- 15 correct — You win the Vezina Trophy!
- 11-14 correct — Kick save, and a beauty!
- 7-10 correct — You're a promising backup goalie for now.
- 3-6 correct — You get the hook in the 2nd period.
- Less than 3 correct — Total Sieve.

1. Last season, Dominik Hasek became the first goalie since 1962 to win MVP. Who was the goalie who won it before Hasek?

2. How many goals did then Detroit Red Wings goaltender Mike Vernon allow the Philadelphia Flyers in the entire 1997 Stanley Cup series?

3. This Hall of Fame goaltender from the 1950s is credited with inventing the butterfly technique.

4. This future Hall of Fame goalie is often credited with modernizing the butterfly technique and making it the state-of-the-art goaltending style it is today.

5. At 6'4", he is listed as the tallest active goalie in the NHL.

6. He dominated international hockey in the 1970s and is considered the greatest Russian goaltender in history.

7. This backup goalie had NHL officials contemplating new rules for goalies because of his oversized padding.

8. This goaltender had the longest shutout streak last season of 213 minutes, 52 seconds, from March 25th to April 8th.

9. This goalie had the most saves in a shutout last season, with 52.

10. This goaltender had only 12 saves in a game last season, but still managed to post a shutout.

11. Last year, this goalie gave up the game winning goal to



Mike Vernon on his way to helping Detroit capture the Cup.

Vincent Damphouse with only 4 seconds left to play in the third period.

12. This goaltender lost his shutout last season when Roman Oksiuta scored with just 2 seconds left to play in the game.

13. This goalie gave up a goal to Paul Kariya last year only 8 seconds into the first period.

14. The NHL rules state that this is the width a goaltender's leg pad may not exceed.

15. This goalie had the best save percentage for a rookie last year at .913%.

Answers: 1. Jacques Plante 2. Six 3. Glenn Hall 4. Patrick Roy 5. Sean Burke 6. Vladislav Tretjak 7. Grant Snow 8. Martin Brodeur 9. Curtis Joseph 10. Ron Hextall 11. Jason Muzzatti 12. Craig Billington 13. Patrick Roy 14. 12 inches 15. Patrick Lalime

TOM BARRASSO

Against all odds, the veteran goalie was back in the net for the Penguins.

If you think the Philadelphia Flyers are the only team in the NHL with a goalie dilemma, all you have to do is focus your attention on the cross-state rival Pittsburgh. The Penguins have two cagey veterans, Ken Wregget and Tom Barrasso, as well as a backup who became something of a rookie sensation last year in Patrick Lalime.

But Lalime was a holdout through training camp and Barrasso has emerged over Wregget this season as the No. 1 goaltender. His consistent play early in the season made it clear to new Penguins coach Kevin Constantine that he's the one who deserves to be in the net full time. Last season, the 32 year old netminder put only five games under his belt, all of which he lost. To make matters worse, he had to have season-ending shoulder surgery, and the Penguins were clearly bothered about it.

Age 32	HT 6-4	WT 211	Catches L	Seasons 14				
	GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA
96-97	5	0-5-0	270	26	186	.860	0	5.78
Career	597	295-213-63	34355	1962	17659	.889	23	3.43

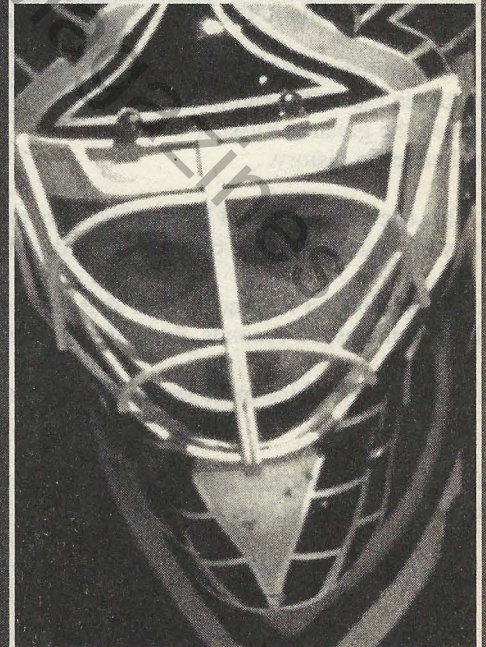
Barrasso was one of the league's highest paid goaltenders at \$2.7 million per year, and after trying unsuccessfully in the off season to trade him the Penguins had no choice but to keep him in camp.

The Penguins' patience paid off. They allowed him to go through rehab for the shoulder and compete for the starting slot at the beginning of this season. Though Wregget is obviously more popular with the players in Pittsburgh, Barrasso's preseason and early season play between the pipes was a welcome sight, and the fact that he was playing pain free for the first time in years, had fans in

Pittsburgh nearly ecstatic.

At 6'3" and 211 pounds, Barrasso is known for being very quick on his feet, as well as being an excellent skater and having exceptional stickwork. He became the all time leader in assists for a goaltender this season and is the winningest U.S. born goalie in history.

Though he may not be the most popular goaltender in Pittsburgh, Tom Barrasso is reminding everyone why he's been able to stay in the league for 14 years. He's an experienced netminder with tremendous confidence and he knows how to win.



Barrasso has returned between the pipes and is showing what he can do when healthy.



Billy Smith:

A Look Back at the Best Goalie of His Era

by Ike Mueller

The greatest clutch game goalie ever? That's what experts say when it comes to Billy Smith. The

pugnacious Perth, Ontario native was the pivotal key to the great Islander dynasty of the 1980s, and while leading his team to four Stanley Cup championships in a row, he racked up hours of penalty minutes and frustrated opposing players and coaches with his aggressive and dominant guardianship of the net. Maybe that's why his nickname was "The Hatchet Man."

Born December 12, 1950, the six-foot one-inch left-hander's career began with the L.A. Kings in 1971 after being selected in the third round draft. An AHL star in 1970-71, Smith immediately proved his worth by allowing only a stingy 2.56 goals against average and leading the Springfield Kings to the Calder Cup Championship. Named the team's Most Valuable Player, he bested his performance the following year by leading the AHL with four regular season shutouts.

Called up to the big time, Smith played a handful of games with the parent Kings before being snagged by the expansion Islanders in the 1972 NHL draft. It was with the Isles that he helped a young expansion team get on



Clutch in the Crease





its feet, sharing the net with the venerable Glenn "Chico" Resch. Smith's aggressive style of play and skill in front of the net earned him an All-Star appearance in the NHL's 1978 All-star game, a game in which he copped MVP honors.

Those Championship Seasons

The Islanders soon shook expansion jitters, maturing as did Smith, becoming the team's first-stringer with their rise in standings and ultimately league dominance. A year past the

collapse of Montreal's dynasty, the Islanders became the first U.S. based club to win four consecutive Stanley Cups. Opposing players and coaches, fans and sportswriters stood in awe of a team driven by skill and character, helmed by Coach Al Arbour and featuring a defensive fortress of Denis Potvin, Stefan Persson, Dave Langevin, Ken Morrow, Bob Lorimer, Tomas Jonsson and Gord Lane.

Leading the scoring ensemble was what was to become known as the "Trio Grande," a forward line of Bryan Trottier, Mike Bossy and Clark Gillies. The supporting cast included Butch Goring, Bob Bourne, John Tonelli, Bob Bystrom, Duane Sutter, Wayne Merrick, Billy Carroll, Brian Sutter and Anders Kallur. Bob Nystrom's dramatic overtime goal against the Philadelphia Flyers in 1980 set the scene for Isles' triumph in the next four years, as Long Island's first and only pro hockey franchise challenged and defeated Minnesota, Vancouver and Edmonton in 1981, 1982 and 1983 respectively. Out of these three series, the Islanders compiled an amazing perfect record, except for a single game loss to Minnesota in game four of the 1981 Final.

1981-82 was Smith's greatest individual season, a year in which he had 32 wins, earned the Vezina Trophy as the NHL's top goaltender and handled net chores at the All-Star Game. In 1982-83, Smith and goalie teammate Roland Melanson shared the William Jennings Trophy when the two combined for the lowest goals against average in the NHL. That same season, Smith was the key to the Islanders' defeat of the Edmonton Oilers as the Isles skated to their fourth consecutive Stanley Cup. With consummate command of the crease, Smith sparkled when he won the Conn Smythe Trophy as the Playoffs' MVP, holding Wayne Gretzky scoreless throughout the series.

In 1984, the streak of championships was at last broken, at

Smith was known as "The Hatchet Man" and was a terror to many shooters who came too close to the crease.

the insistent and potent hammering of an Oiler team that was soon to be deemed unstoppable. Smith, no longer able to contain Oiler greats like Messier, Gretzky and Bryan Trottier, finally brought the Isle dynasty to a close. He was replaced in the series by Roland Melanson "for a little injection," according to coach Arbour, but a larger dose was required.

After the series, Smith was a gentleman to the core. "Al Arbour is the best coach in the game today and these are the best guys I've ever been with. This is the best organization I've ever seen."

"They're a great hockey team," coach Arbour said in gracious defeat as the Islanders' death knell came with a score of 7-2. Of Billy Smith, Arbour said, "The old war horse has done a great job for us."

A Scrapper in the Crease

If there was ever a goalie who put excitement into a game, it was Billy Smith. The Vezina trophy-winner was not only adept at preventing the opposition from penetrating the net, but he was skilled with the wielding of a stick. Smith was the first goalie to be given credit for scoring a goal, in a game in which the Islanders were pitted against the Colorado Rockies. When the Rockies pulled their goaltender, Colorado's Rob Ramage accidentally tipped the puck into his own net. Credit for the score went to Smith, who was the last Islander to touch the puck, which slid the length of the ice into the Rockies' net, which was deserted after a delayed penalty call. (FYI, Philadelphia Flyer Ron Hextall has since done it twice, first against the Boston Bruins in 1987 and the Washington Capitals in 1989. Martin Brodeur also scored for the New Jersey Devils in last year's playoffs against the Montreal Canadiens.)

Smith would contribute to his team in

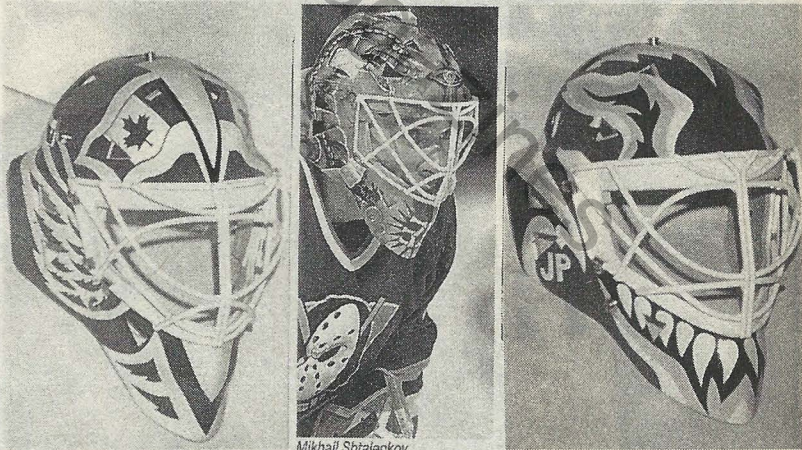
more than just statistics. His aggressive protection of the goal served fair warning to opposing players that this was his territory. He would take on the best in the game: in the Islanders' 1981 championship season, his slashing of Wayne Gretzky drew the ire of the Oilers and their coach, Glenn Sather. In the second period of an Islanders-Oilers game, Smith hit Gretzky with his large goalies' stick and Gretzky fell to the ice. Smith was not penalized as the Great One hobbled off the ice and was unable to play the rest of the game.

Later, Gretzky complained that NHL refs didn't penalize Smith often enough, and Sather charged that Smith had "deliberately" tried to hurt Gretzky. "He was obviously trying to hurt somebody," Sather told the New York Times "that's what he was trying to do. He's been doing it for years, and the refs don't pay any attention. It's not as if this is a freak thing."

Smith denied the action was intentional. Other incidents in years to come were to echo the controversy of the alleged Gretzky slash. In January of 1985, the NHL suspended Smith for six games after he swung his stick against the Chicago Black Hawks. The league's VP, Brian O'Neill, said he'd reviewed the game and concluded that Smith had swung his stick three times in "an irresponsible manner." In the incident, Black Hawk left wing Curt Fraser suffered a fractured cheekbone and other facial injuries. As a result, he was sidelined for six weeks. O'Neill said that Smith had not deliberately attempted to injure Fraser, "Nonetheless, the player must be held responsible for his actions."

JP

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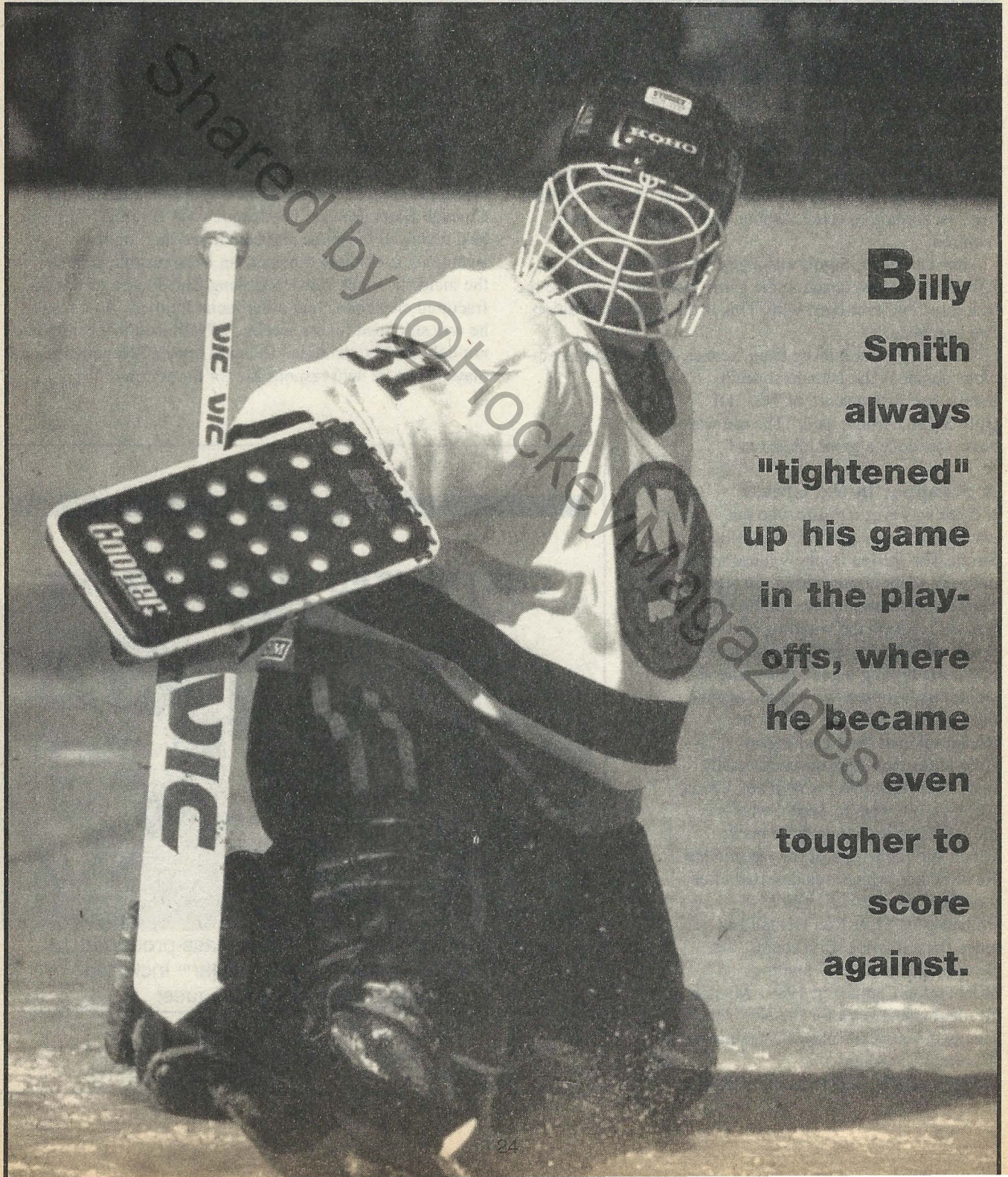
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Oddly, such an aggressive player has been described as a shy man who has had to work hard at being comfortable in public. After the skein of championship years, the Islanders would go into a rebuilding period, but Smith remained a strong performer until his retirement after the 1989 season.

His stats, ultimately, tell the story: in 18 NHL seasons, Smith logged over 305 wins in 680 games eighth on the NHL's all-time list and he surrendered a meager 3.17 goals per game in the more offense-oriented brand of hockey played in the 80s. He was on the winning side of 88 playoff games out of 132, five of those shutouts. His playoff goals

against average was an opposition-choking 2.73.

Now residing in Long Island, Smith is dispensing goal-tending advice as a coach with the playoff-contending Florida Panthers. The well-honored Smith achieved the ultimate accolade as the Islanders retired his number, 31, on February 20, 1993. That same year he was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame. Billy Smith was always big in the big time, fans knew. He always showed up when money was on the line, and Islander fans will cherish the championship memories.



**Billy
Smith
always
"tightened"
up his game
in the play-
offs, where
he became
even
tougher to
score
against.**

Statistics don't lie. The trend in hockey in recent years is that scoring is on its way down, making goaltenders look more effective than ever before. While many have attributed this decrease in overall scoring to several factors, including better goaltending, better equipment and tighter, aggressive defensive play, one factor may be most responsible. The semicircle crease (introduced in 1986-87) is 24 1/2 square feet larger than the old four-by-eight rectangular crease. This added room enables goalies to move without obstruction, cutting down on angles, as well as forcing the offense to move further away from the net to deflect rebounds. Referees are disallowing more goals than ever before because of offensive players having a skate in the crease.

The question:

Should the size of the crease be decreased in order to give goalies less of an advantage, and thereby increase scoring?

 Yes, I think the NHL should make the crease smaller.

 No, I think the NHL should leave the crease just the way it is.

WHY: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Prov. _____ Zip _____

Mail to: *Superstar Goalies*, Saratoga Publishing, 25 Sylvan Rd So., Suite H, Westport, CT 06880

OVERRATED *or* OVERLOOKED?

**Closer Inspection of NHL Goalies Who
Are Not Earning Their Pay in the Crease
(and some who deserve a raise!)**

By Kent Devereaux

There's only one thing worse than a shot goalie, and that's a good goalie who toils in obscurity, goes unrecognized and is eventually released before he ever finds his place in the NHL. A goalie whose reflexes are gone is much easier to spot than a goalie who quietly turns in workman-like performances night after night, but never grabs any headlines.

In that spirit, we've compiled a collection of goaltenders in the NHL who fit both categories. Some will only confirm what you've suspected all along: your favorite goalie is a sieve. Others will have you shaking your head, wondering, 'How come I never heard of this guy?'

UNDERACHIEVERS

JIM CAREY

After being named rookie of the year by The Hockey News in 1995 and winning the Vezina Trophy in 1996, Jim Carey inked a deal with the Boston Bruins that made him one of the highest paid goalies in the NHL. "Dumb and Dumber" is what the Bruins fans are saying about this latest Jim Carey scenario.

The Boston puckstopper had a pathetic season in goal last year, and it left many people wondering if his play was merely a slump or a revelation around the league that Carey can be beaten and beaten easily. His 3.08 goals against average, combined with his .886% save percentage are numbers that simply do not keep a goalie in the NHL for very long. But with the his hefty contract, the Bruins have a serious investment in Carey, and the entire organization is praying he can get his act together.

Carey showed tremendous promise as a rookie with Washington, and in his second year with the Caps, he established himself as the league's best goalie. But after being traded to Boston, the 23 year old began showing some serious flaws in

Jim Carey has some fans complaining that the Boston Bruins management is 'Dumb and Dumber.'



his game that became evident immediately. Most noticeably, he drops too quickly into his butterfly style, and opponents

have been scoring high on him at will.

The Bruins are counting on Carey to rediscover the shotblocking skills he showed in his brief stint with Washington. But unless he seriously revamps his game, Carey is headed for a long season of misery in Boston.

TREVOR KIDD

The Calgary Flames just gave up on Trevor Kidd and unloaded him to the

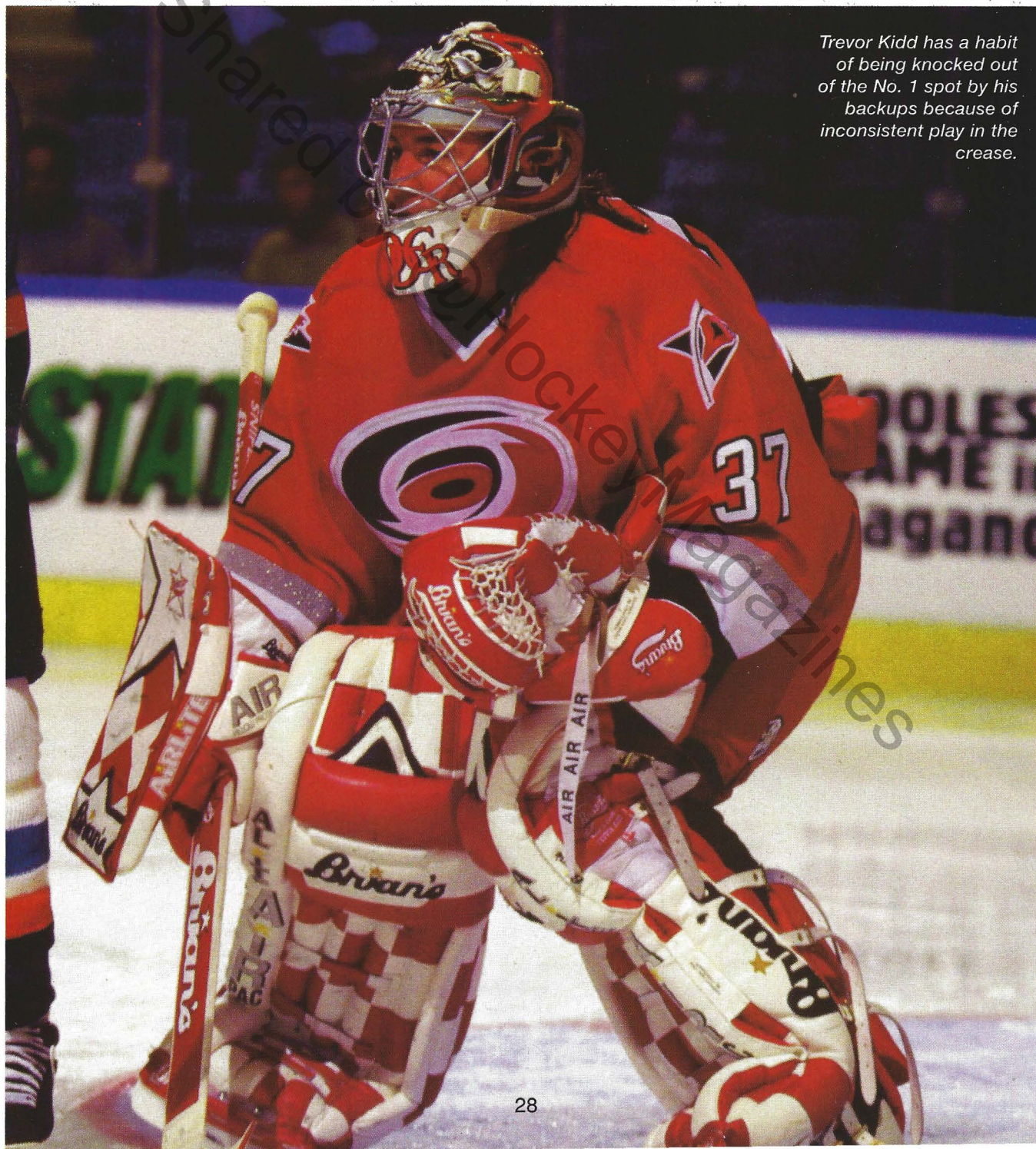
Carolina Hurricanes in the off season once they picked up Rick Tabaracci. Kidd was supposed to develop into an elite-level goalie, but after five seasons in the NHL, the 6'2", 190 pound netminder is the living definition of the word, "underachiever."

After being selected by the Flames in the first round of the 1990 draft, the organization had high hopes for the big puckstopper. He's a great skater, a tremendous athlete and is capable of defensive prowess at the highest level of NHL goalies.

But Kidd seems to be going back-

wards in terms of progress. His numbers are strictly mediocre, with a goals against average of 2.84 and a save percentage of .900%. Though he posted 4 shutouts last year with the Flames, those shutouts only seem to highlight the inconsistent play that Trevor Kidd has defined his brief career with. Kidd's problem, some say, is that he allows his emotions to get the best of him at times, and his stubbornness to learn the basics of goaltending only adds to his difficulties. He's learning that in the NHL, being a great athlete just isn't enough.

Trevor Kidd has a habit of being knocked out of the No. 1 spot by his backups because of inconsistent play in the crease.



ED BELFOUR

The Dallas Stars took a huge gamble by signing Ed Belfour at over \$5 million per season for 3 years. The 32 year old puckstopper is coming off one of his worst seasons in years, and nobody knows for sure if it's because of a nagging back injury, arun-in with Chicago Blackhawk management that sent him packing to the pitiful San Jose Sharks, or his temperamental attitude.

The Stars are obviously hoping

Belfour will return to his form of old, when the 5'11", 182 pound superstar won three Jennings Trophies and two Vezina Trophies with the Blackhawks this decade. In fact, Dallas is clearly praying Belfour's woes with San Jose can be attributed to the fact that the Sharks are a very bad hockey team that gave him absolutely no support.

While no one is arguing that the Sharks were shaky, a look at Belfour's numbers seem to indicate that the 8

year veteran NHL goaltender didn't do much to help in San Jose. His record out west was just 3-9-0, while giving up a miserable 3.41 goals per game. More important, however, was Belfour's save percentage, a measly .884%.

If Eddie "The Eagle" Belfour continues on his present slide down in Dallas, there won't be a team left in the NHL who will take a chance on him.



Eddie "The Eagle" Belfour may be on his last tour of duty with Dallas.

BILL RANFORD

At 31 years of age, many people are beginning to wonder if Bill Ranford is just a below average goalie with the bad luck to be playing on bad teams. But at some point, you have to look at his numbers, and those numbers don't lie. In fact, what they tell you is that Bill Ranford is indeed, a below-average goalie.

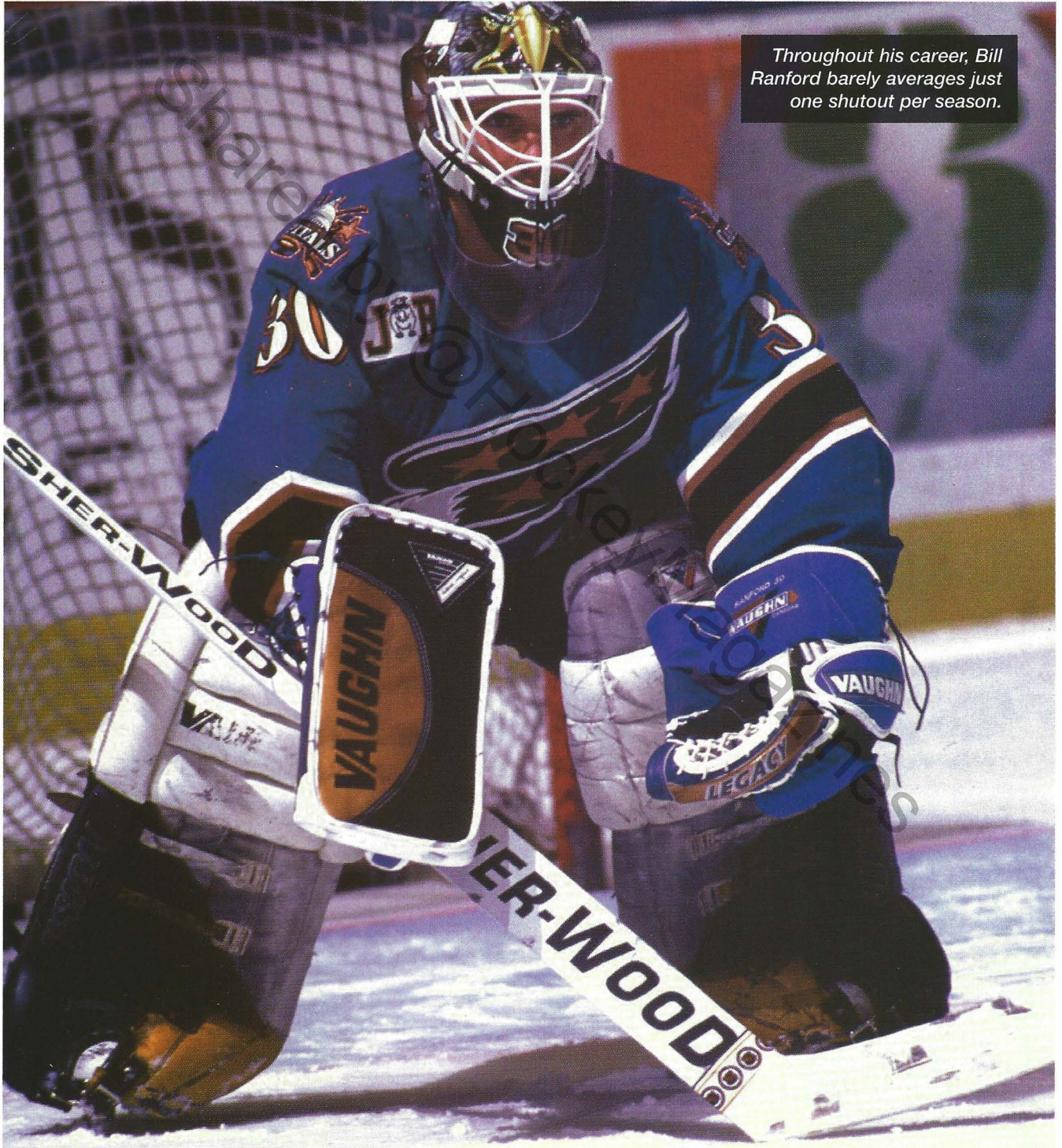
With 12 NHL seasons under his belt, Ranford's goals against average is a whopping 3.41. Perhaps that can be

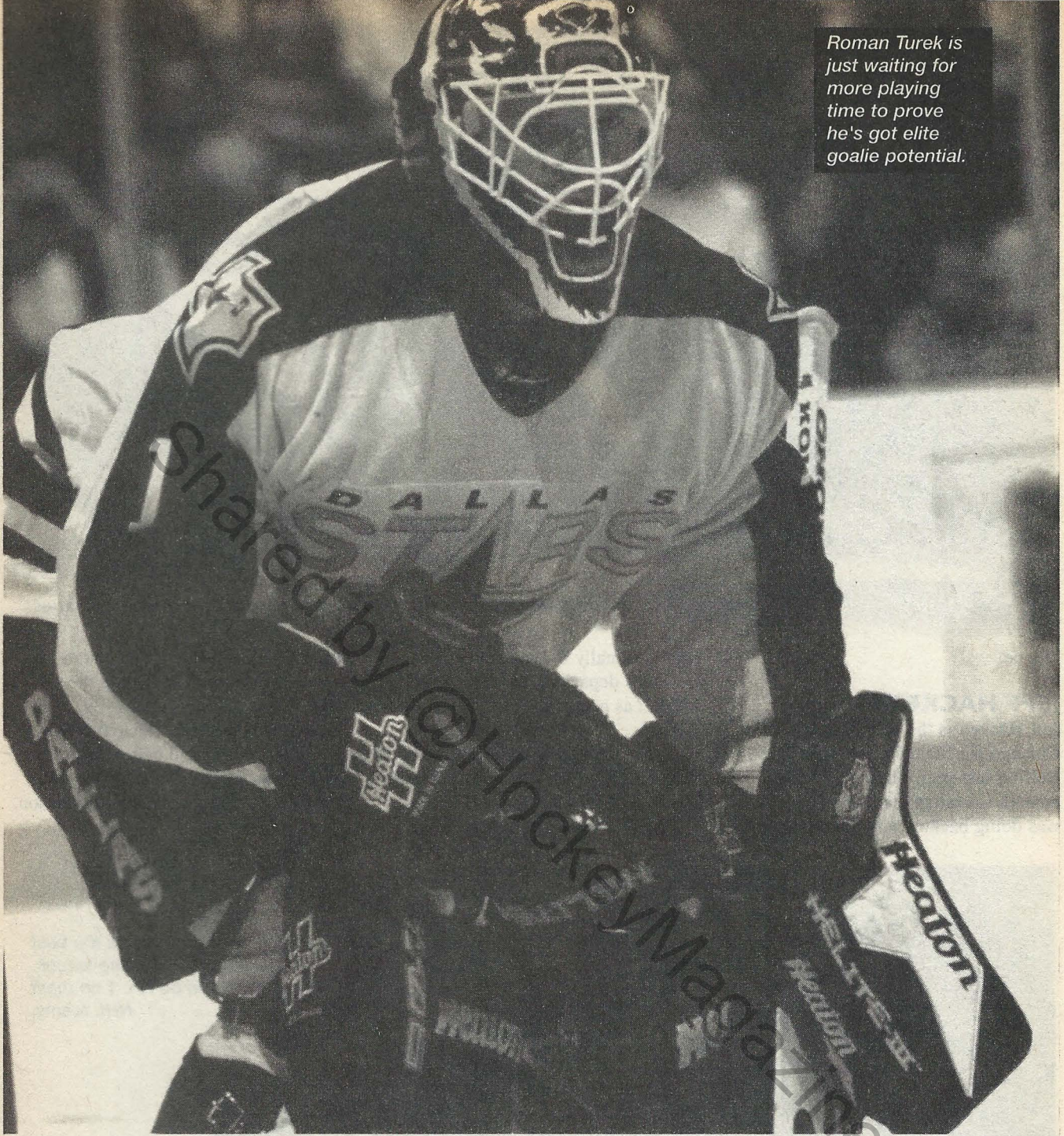
attributed to some extent to the poor teams he's played on. The same goes for his career won-lost record, which stood at 223-243-67 at the start of the season. But when you consider that the 5'10", 170 pound netminder has never posted a save percentage over .900% in a single season, and that his career percentage is just .888%, you begin to understand why the fans seem to hold their breath whenever a shot comes his way.

To make matters worse for Capitals

fans, Ranford barely averages one shutout a season. Perhaps the most apparent reason for his numbers is that he's a small goalie and he still hasn't found a comfortable method of playing the angles. During the off season, Ranford had a cyst removed from his shoulder, and Washington is hoping it helps him return to the Stanley Cup winning form he had in 1990 with Edmonton when he won the Conn Smythe Trophy.

Throughout his career, Bill Ranford barely averages just one shutout per season.





Roman Turek is just waiting for more playing time to prove he's got elite goalie potential.

UNDEREXPOSED

ROMAN TUREK

If there is an upside for Dallas Stars' fans having Ed Belfour as the starting goalie, it would have to be that should Belfour hit one of his patented "sieve streaks," waiting in the wings is Roman Turek. Turek only played in six games for the Stars last year, coming from Michigan in the IHL. However, he did manage to post a 3-1 record, a

2.05 goals against average, and an impressive .930% save percentage.

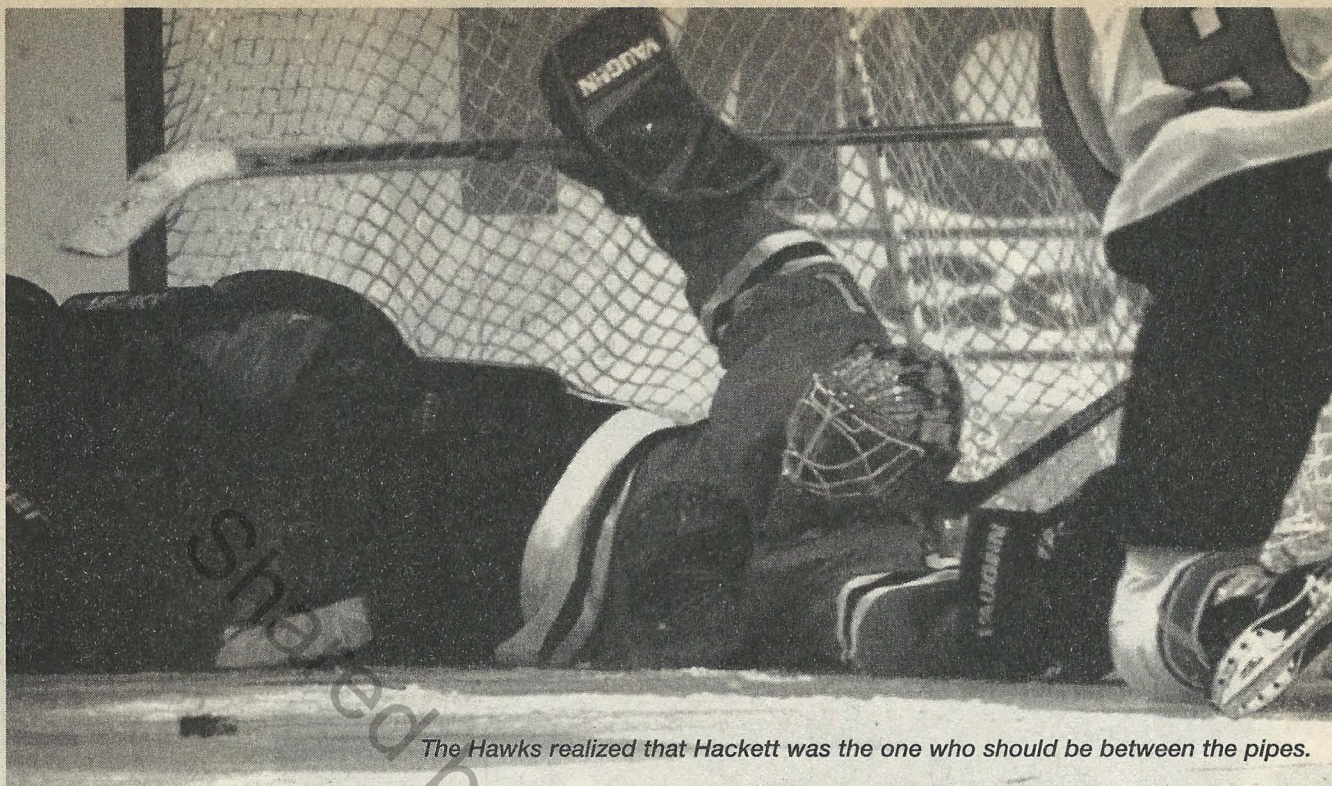
Turek is a lanky 6'3" standup goalie, and at 27, he is just coming into his prime. He just needs a chance to prove he can play in the NHL.

SEAN BURKE

Big Sean Burke is hard not to notice because of his size. At 6'4", 210 pounds, he's the biggest goaltender in the league. But the Hurricanes netminder quietly plays an impressive game in

front of the net. He was ranked eighth in the league for save percentage at .914%, and he racked up four shutouts as well as a 2.69 goals against average on a sub .500 team.

Burke is a fiery competitor on the ice, and at 30, he has been improving nearly every season. What he lacks in imagination at angle play, his size alone more than compensates, as pucks simply find a way of hitting him. Still, Burke's effectiveness at stopping shots is underrated, as is his leadership on



The Hawks realized that Hackett was the one who should be between the pipes.

the ice.

JEFF HACKETT

Jeff Hackett is the very reason the Chicago Blackhawks unloaded Ed Belfour last year. They were smart enough to realize that the better goalie was doing backup work, and when

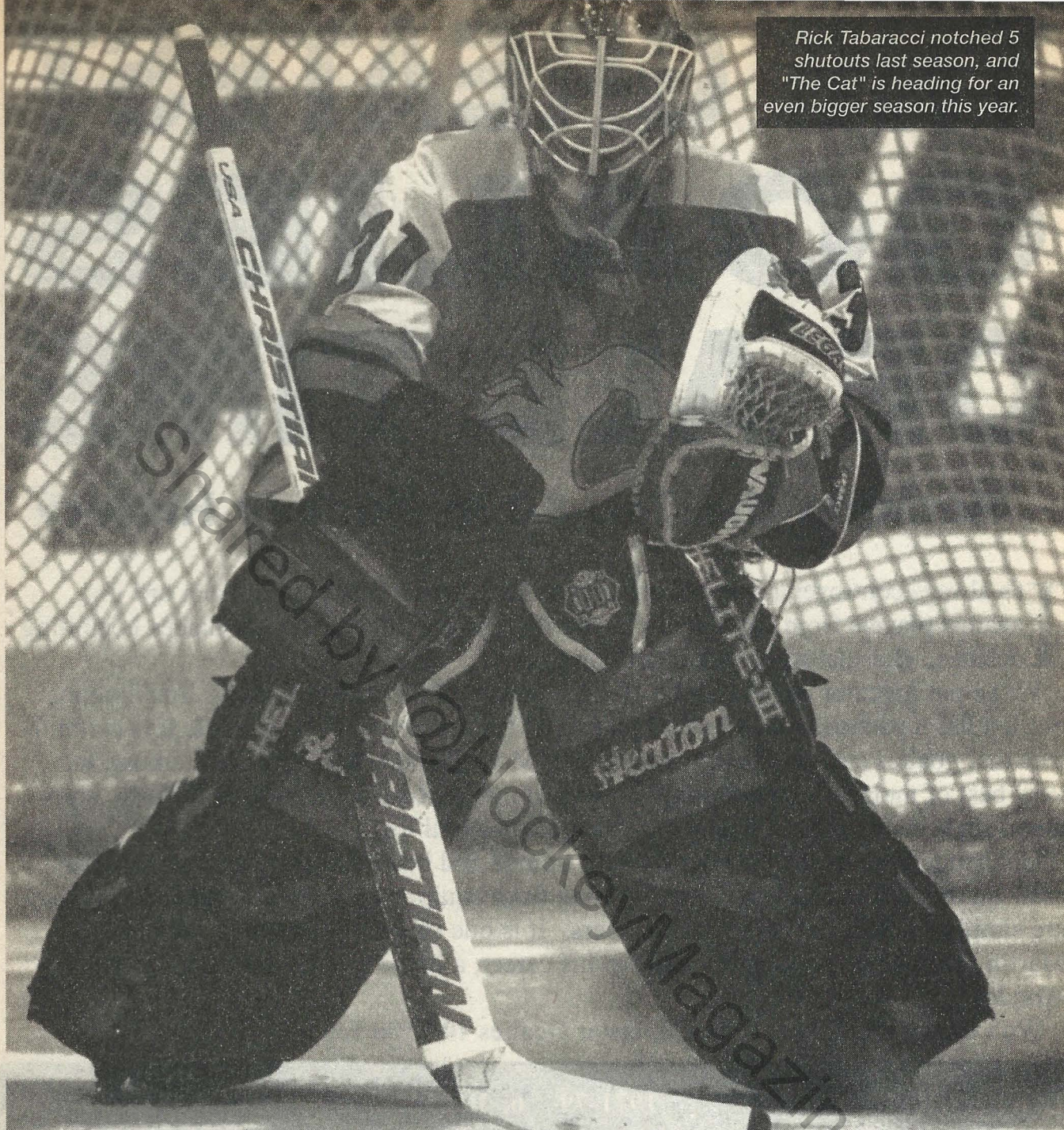
Hackett finally did see action after Belfour's departure, he established himself as one of the NHL's top goal-tenders.

In 41 games last year, he posted the league's third best goals against average at 2.16, and was second only to Dominik Hasek in save percentage

with .927%. The 6'1", 180 pound netminder loves to challenge the NHL's best shooters, and at 29, he has tremendous reflexes. Hackett seems to be getting better and better each year, and he has a good chance of developing into an elite goaltender this season.



Mark Fitzpatrick is the best backup goalie in the league, and would be No. 1 on most NHL teams.



Rick Tabaracci notched 5 shutouts last season, and "The Cat" is heading for an even bigger season this year.

MARK FITZPATRICK

No one envies Mark Fitzpatrick's present situation. He would be a starter on just about any other team in the league, but instead he must settle for the title of best backup goalie in the NHL, playing behind one of the very best puckstoppers, John Vanbiesbrouck. In fact, the 29 year old backup posted nearly identical numbers to those of Vanbiesbrouck. Playing in 30 games, Fitzpatrick logged an 8-9-9 record with a 2.36 goals against average and a save percentage of .919%.

Teams around the league are paying

close attention to the 6'2", 190 pound netminder, as Fitzpatrick becomes eligible for free agency at the end of the season. There are more than a few NHL teams who are no doubt salivating at the chance to make him a full time goalie.

RICK TABARACCI

Rick Tabaracci came back to Calgary once again, and Trevor Kidd was sent packing. The Flames finally figured out what many fans already knew: The "Tabby Cat," with a little room to breathe as the No. 1 goalie, would be a

better fit than Kidd.

At 29, Tabaracci is just entering his prime years, and having posted 5 shutouts last season, the Calgary brass were obviously quite confident that The Cat was worth bringing back, even at the expense of the overrated Kidd. Now Tabaracci is proving that last season's .903% save percentage was no fluke, and that he is one of the goaltenders to watch in the coming years.

THE GREATEST GOALIES OF ALL TIME

Ranking the Top 10 in Hockey History

It's always controversial whenever anyone attempts to rank players from one era against players from another era in sports. The most it ever accomplishes is igniting debates. But that's not such a bad thing, is it?

We've put together our list of the 10 best goalies of all time in hockey. You'll notice our list has a particular bias toward players of the modern era. Now while it is certainly true that goalies such as Bill Durnan, Gerry McNeil and Glenn Hall were among the very best of their time, we strongly believe in the Michael Jordan vs. Bob Cousy argument. In other words, the game has changed an awful lot.

Goaltenders are better protected, better trained and better coached these days. They draw on modern technology for everything from equipment to fitness training, and they are simply smarter, earlier in their careers. It is one of the main reasons we believe Martin Brodeur is, even at this stage in his career, a better goaltender than Gump Worsley.

With that in mind, here is the Superstar Goalies 1997-98 Top 10 List

1. KEN DRYDEN	1971-79	6. BILLY SMITH	1971-89
2. VLADISLAV TRETIAK	1970-85	7. TERRY SAWCHUK	1949-70
3. PATRICK ROY	1984-ACTIVE	8. MARTIN BRODEUR	1992-ACTIVE
4. JACQUES PLANTE	1952-73	9. TONY ESPOSITO	1968-84
5. BERNIE PARENT	1965-79	10. GRANT FUHR	1981-ACTIVE

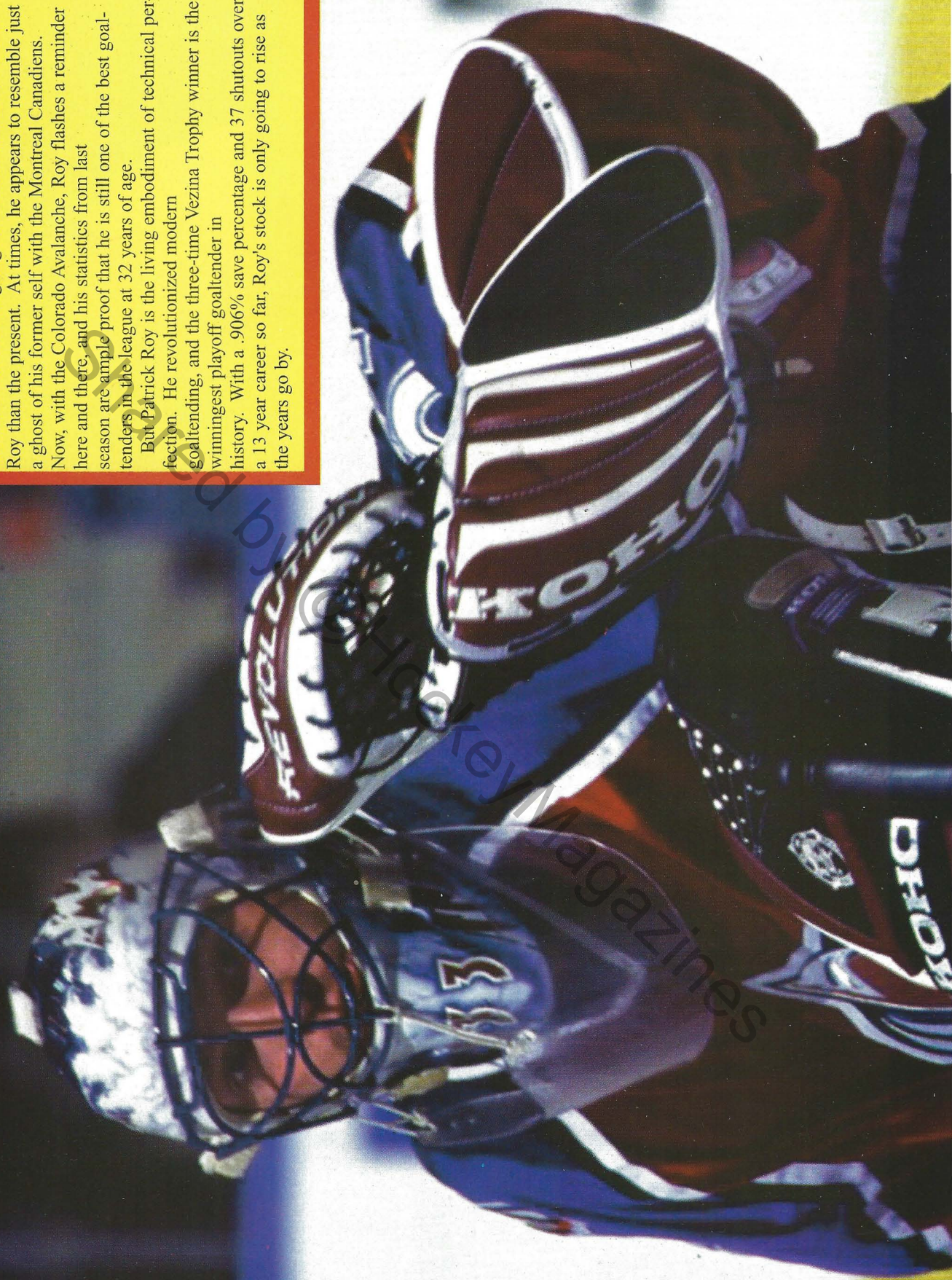
Ken Dryden had a remarkable 2.24 career goal's against average.



3. PATRICK ROY

We think the future is going to be much kinder to Patrick Roy than the present. At times, he appears to resemble just a ghost of his former self with the Montreal Canadiens. Now, with the Colorado Avalanche, Roy flashes a reminder here and there, and his statistics from last season are ample proof that he is still one of the best goaltenders in the league at 32 years of age.

But Patrick Roy is the living embodiment of technical perfection. He revolutionized modern goaltending, and the three-time Vezina Trophy winner is the winningest playoff goaltender in history. With a .906% save percentage and 37 shutouts over a 13 year career so far, Roy's stock is only going to rise as the years go by.





1. KEN DRYDEN

Ken Dryden only played in the NHL for eight seasons, a short tenure by today's standards. But like Sandy Koufax, Dryden dominated his game and put together a string of years (1970-79) that made it clear to anyone who ever saw him play that he was the very best.

The five-time Vezina Trophy winner also managed to lead the Montreal Canadiens to six Stanley Cup Championships. There are those who say that Dryden simply benefitted by playing for one of the most impressive dynasties in the history of sports. While there might be some truth to

that, what is absolutely astonishing is that Dryden posted a career goals against average of just 2.24 in an era when scoring was much higher than it is today.

We have no doubt that the 6'4" superstar would have been great in any era, and we have no hesitation declaring him the best goaltender ever.

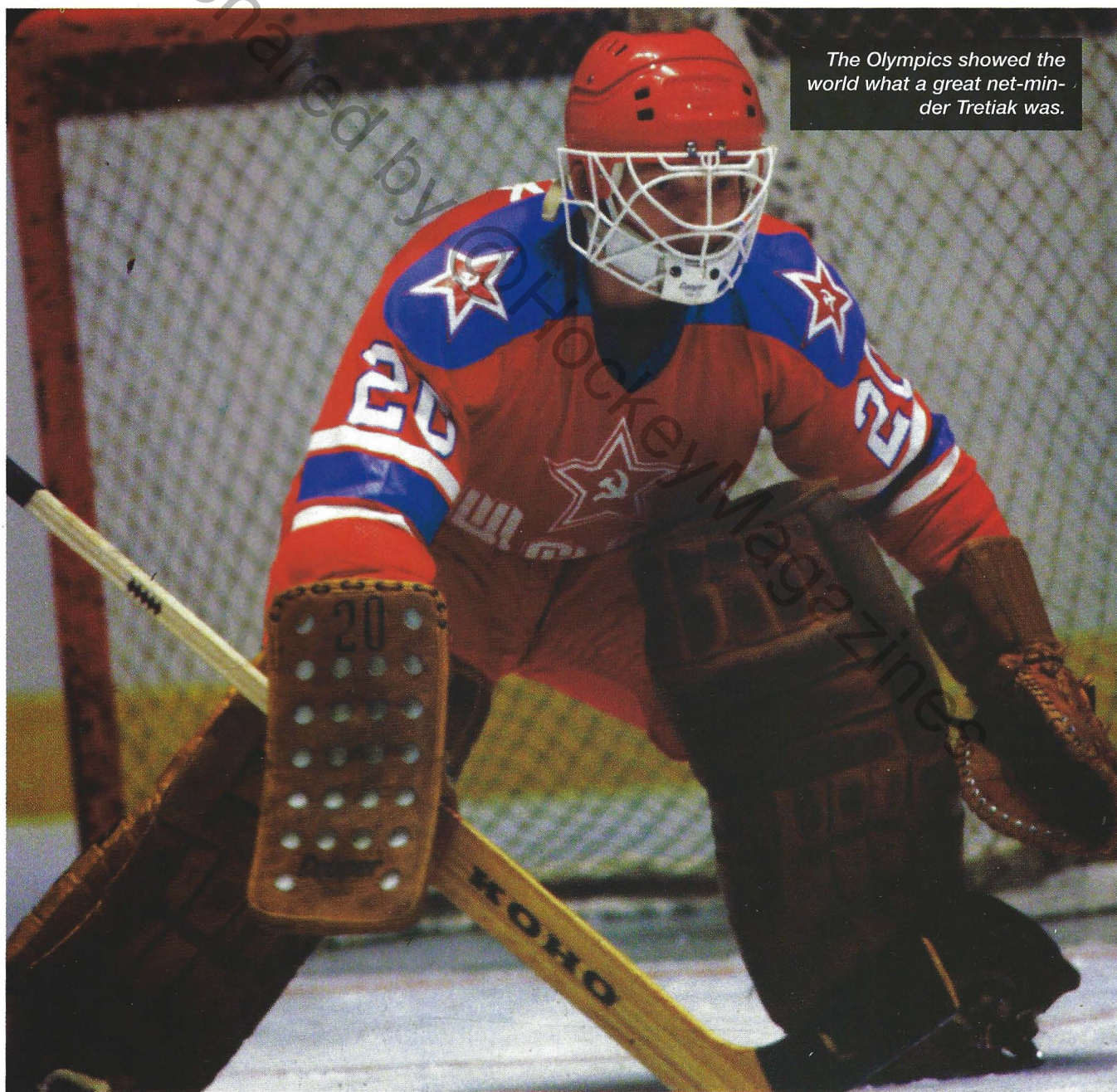
2. VLADISLAV TRETIK

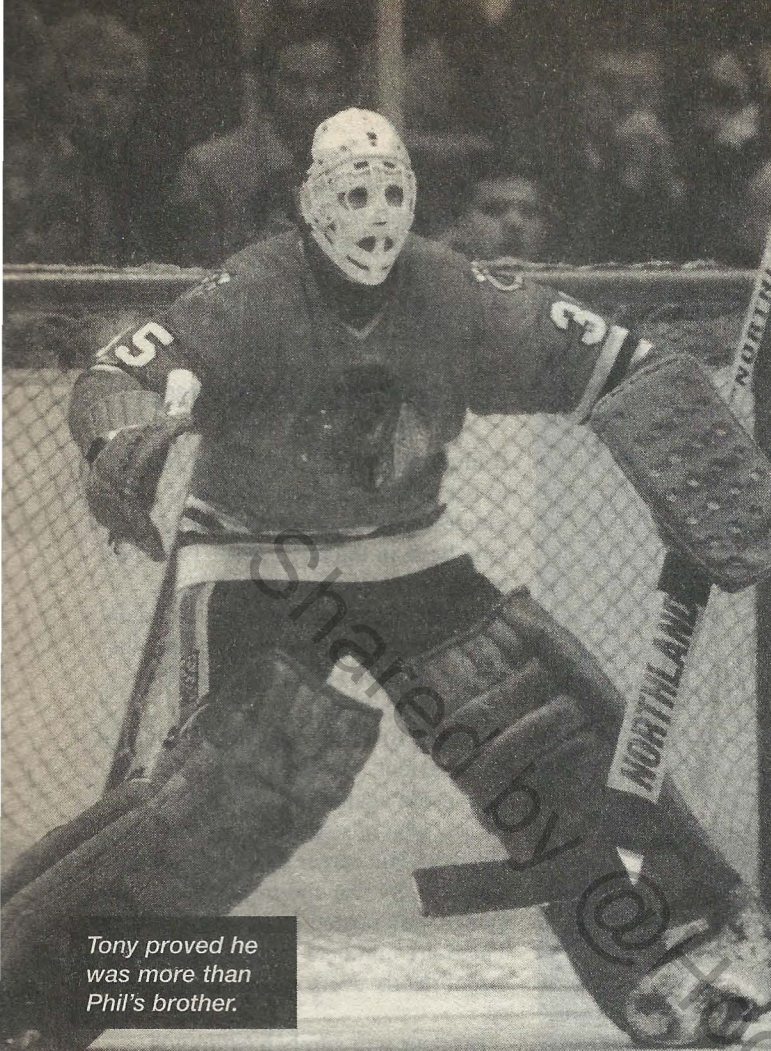
Vladislav Tretiak might be an unusual choice for an all-time top ten goaltenders list for some publications. And perhaps if you try to compare him to other NHL goaltenders by statistics alone, the task would be difficult

indeed. But anyone who can remember the intimidating Russian goaltender in his infamous red caged mask during any of the Olympic and World Championship games, knew they were watching one of the greatest goalies the game has ever seen.

From 1970 to 1985, Tretiak led Soviet Union to three Olympic Gold Medals and ten World Titles. He was the first Russian ever inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame, and had he ever played in the NHL, he surely would have been just as dominant. In 98 World Championship games, the Soviet netminder posted a remarkable 1.78 goals against average.

The Olympics showed the world what a great net-min-der Tretiak was.





Tony proved he was more than Phil's brother.



Sawchuk had more zippers on his face than the Frankenstein monster.

4. JACQUES PLANTE

Jacques Plante played in the NHL from 1952-73 and won the Vezina Trophy seven times. Over the length of his career, he managed to achieve some of the greatest accomplishments any professional goaltender could ever dream of. He posted a career 2.38 goals against average. He won six Stanley Cup championships with the Montreal Canadiens. He notched 82 shutouts over his career, and he was the first goaltender to popularize the use of the facemask.

But numbers alone do not even begin to describe the play of Jacques Plante in the net. Elected into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1978, Plante was an extremely determined, focused and competitive goaltender who understood that he had to save his greatest performances for the drive to the Stanley Cup. It is no surprise that Plante's goals against average plummeted

to 2.17 in postseason play, making him one of the best goalies ever in the clutch.

5. BERNIE PARENT

Bernie Parent played in the NHL for 13 seasons and led the Philadelphia Flyers to back-to-back Stanley Cup wins in 1974 and 1975. He twice won the Vezina Trophy, and many hockey aficionados consider him the very best goalie in terms of "angle" play in NHL history.

Parent was an extremely intelligent netminder, who racked up 55 career shutouts and a 2.55 goals against average. We think he's the kind of goalie who would have been a superstar were he playing today, and it was no surprise to anyone that Bernie Parent was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1984.

Flyers fans will remember him as the man who finally brought the Cup to

Philadelphia. But hockey fans remember him as a pure and talented standup goalie who could simply shut down all scoring by opposing teams.

6. BILLY SMITH

Billy Smith was clearly the best goalie of his era. In an 18 year career that ranged from 1972 to 1989, Smith was the winning goalie for all four New York Islanders Stanley Cup championships.

At times he could be vicious, often slashing opponents with his stick if they spent too much time around his crease. But what often got overlooked is the fact that Smith was an extremely talented and efficient puckstopper. Over his career he posted a 3.17 goals against average during the regular season. However, what is more impressive is that Smith always rose to the challenge in the net once the postseason began. In 132 playoff

games, his goals against average dropped to 2.73.

A winner of the Vezina Trophy in 1981-82, Smith will always be remembered as a big money goalie who knew how to tear the heart out of the opposing team's offensive hopes.

7. TERRY SAWCHUK

Terry Sawchuk had the distinct honor of playing hockey in the NHL for a career that spanned four decades. In 21 seasons from 1949 to 1970, Sawchuk played on five Stanley Cup winning teams and won the Vezina

Trophy four times.

Sawchuk was one of those "old-time" goalies whose face was often photographed because it usually had so many stitches in it that it looked like a baseball. Over his career he posted 103 shutouts and a goals against average of 2.52. Inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1971, Sawchuk was a classic netminder who, to many people, epitomized the position of goaltender.

8. MARTIN BRODEUR

It might be considered presumptuous to list Martin Brodeur as one of the greatest goalies of all time when he has only been in the NHL since 1992. In terms of his accomplishments, he certainly hasn't won as many Stanley Cups as most other goalies on this list. In fact, he hasn't even won his first Vezina Trophy yet.

Martin Brodeur makes the list based on his talent. So far, he has posted a 2.25 goals against average for his career, which is second only to Ken Dryden. His career save percentage stands at .915%, and in just 235 games, he's posted 22 shutouts already. These are numbers that put him at the top of nearly every goaltending category.

Brodeur will surely have to add another Stanley Cup championship to his resume, as well as a few Vezina Trophies for most hockey purists to take him seriously enough to be mentioned in the same breath as Jacques Plante and Ken Dryden. But we believe that Brodeur is legitimately on his way to becoming one of the best goaltenders the NHL has ever seen.

9. TONY ESPOSITO

Tony Esposito may well best be remembered for being the brother of hockey legend Phil Esposito. In fact, in Tony's first game as goalie for the Montreal Canadiens in 1968, he gave up only two goals, both to Phil as the Canadiens tied the Boston Bruins.

However, Esposito more than carved out a name for himself, winning three Vezina Trophies over a career that spanned 16 years from 1969 to 1984. He also posted a career goals against average of 2.92, numbers that clearly would have been much better had the Chicago Blackhawks teams he played

*The heart-and-soul of those
Islander championships.*



Plante's 2.38 career goals against average is remarkable considering he did it over a span of 21 years.



on been more successful.

The five-time All Star was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1988.

10. GRANT FUHR

At age 35, Grant Fuhr is not the goalie he once was for the Edmonton Oilers during their dynasty years in the 1980s. Still, he is clearly a first ballot Hall of Famer, and going into the 1997-98 season, he had more victories notched on

his belt than any other active goaltender in the NHL.

With 17 seasons of NHL experience, Fuhr remains one of the coolest goalies the game has ever seen. His steady demeanor under pressure has always had a calming effect on his team, and his trademark reflexes are still unmatched.

Fuhr has posted a career goals against average of 3.48, which is almost a goal higher than many of the

other greats on this list. But Grant Fuhr has always had what it took to win the big games.

Editor's Note: Don't agree with our list-and want to make a replacement ...or two? Let us hear about it. If we get enough rabid response, we'll publish a follow-up "Readers' Top 10" list!

ANDY MOOG

Getting Better With Age!

Like the finest wines, Andy Moog demonstrated last season that he just keeps getting better as the years go by. At 37, Moog turned in a career best 2.15 goals against average with the Dallas Stars, and he caught the attention of the Montreal Canadiens who were looking to bolster the team's goaltending position. Montreal signed Moog during the off-season, and the Canadiens are clearly hoping the crafty veteran has at least one more great season in him.

Last year, only Martin Brodeur of the New Jersey Devils posted a better GAA than Moog, and this season, Moog became fifth on the NHL all-time win list, passing legendary Rogatien Vachon with 355 wins.

With Montreal's signing of Moog, the 5'8", 170 pound netminder will unavoidably find himself in

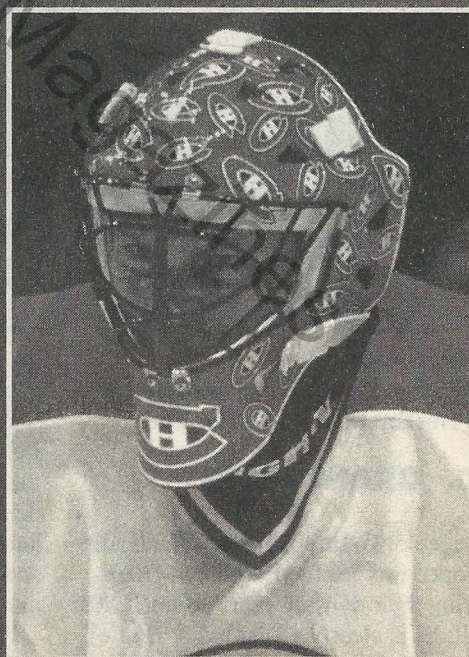
Age 37	HT 5-8	WT 170	Catches L	Seasons 17				
	GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA
96-97	48	28-13-5	2738	98	1121	.913	3	2.15
Career	671	354-192-83	37814	2000	17931	.888	25	3.17

the position of having to prove himself once again. But Moog made it clear he wasn't going to Montreal to mother the Canadiens' young goalies, Jocelyn Thibault and Jose Theodore. He went north to win, and he expects to start in 50 games as the team's number one goalie.

At 37 years old, many wonder how Moog is able to maintain his reflexes. He is one of the sharpest goalies in the league, and is especially quick getting up on his feet. Moog is also a very intense competitor, which more than makes up for his lack of size and

sometimes unpolished technique. He has, however, been subject to chronic nagging injuries in past years.

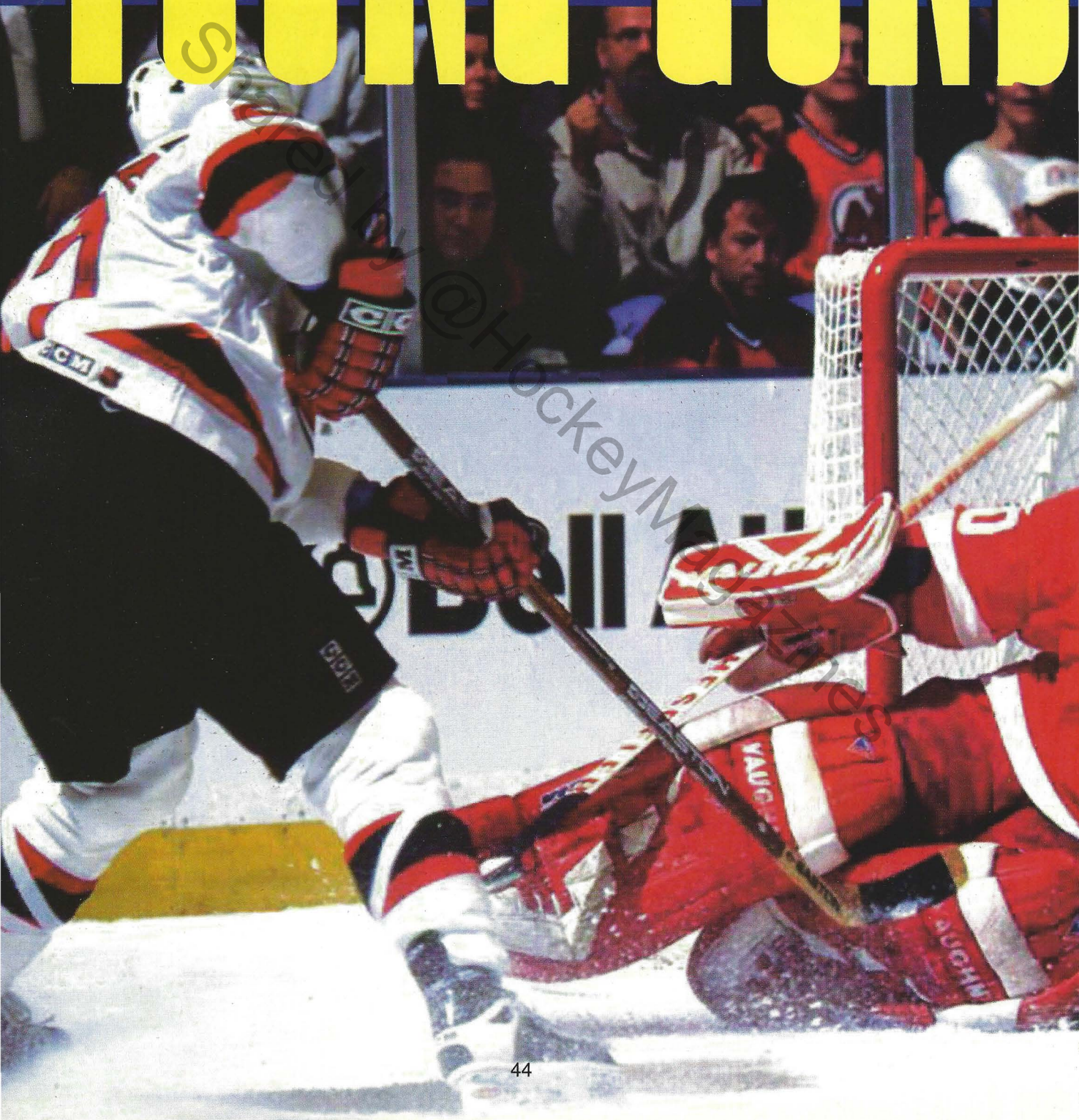
Still, Andy Moog, with 17 seasons of NHL experience behind him, wants to erase the unpleasant memories of last year's upset playoff loss in the first round against the Edmonton Oilers, where he was branded the goat after being outplayed by Oilers goalie, Curtis Joseph. Those kinds of memories don't sit well with great goalies and Montreal is happy to know that Moog feels he has something to prove.



After being outplayed by Joseph in the first round of the playoffs last year, Moog feels he has something to prove.



YOUNG GUNS



IN GOAL

All of Hockey

Has Eyes on

These Young

Superstars!

by Clark Dubert

John Vanbiesbrouck. Patrick Roy. Mike Richter. Even Dominik Hasek. It may be hard to believe, but these superstar goaltenders in the NHL are not going to be around forever. Even the great and seemingly indestructible veteran Grant Fuhr is going to have to eventually concede that the young generation of netminers is coming, and they appear to be bigger and faster than ever before.

Who are these young guns? Which of these promising goalie names are soon to roll off our tongues when we speak of the great ones? Can anyone possibly fill the skates of the clutch, reliable, fifteen-year veterans in the net once the playoffs begin?

The answer is a resounding YES! The fact is, young goalies in the NHL today are far better skilled at their age than any goalies in the history of the league. The reason? Those very crafty veterans mentioned above, while hanging onto their No. 1 goaltender positions, have tutored and groomed many of the best young goalies in the game. Those same young goalies have, thanks to free agency, signed with teams in need of quality players in the net. And many of them have stepped right into the starting jobs, performing well beyond their years.



Chris Osgood is finally getting his chance to shine with the Stanley Cup Champion Red Wings.

MARTIN BRODEUR

Perhaps the best known of the current young crop of goalies, Martin Brodeur has already established himself as one of hockey's true superstars. The 25 year old, 5-year veteran has already won a Stanley Cup, and is establishing personal milestones each year.

Last year, Brodeur posted a 1.88 goals against average, which was the best by any goaltender since Bernie Parent in 1962. The Vezina nominee also logged 10 shutouts, which no goalie has accomplished since the legendary Montreal Canadian Ken Dryden.

But Brodeur seems to be wise beyond his years in the net. He truly epitomizes the current trend in young goalies who are big, exceptional ath-

letes with fast reflexes, sound positional play and great technique. The 6'1", 205 pound New Jersey Devil even proved his superb stickhandling skills by scoring a goal in the playoffs against the Montreal Canadiens.

It may not even be too early to say that Brodeur is well on his way to a Hall of Fame career. His numbers are that impressive, and his play in front of the net calls to mind some of the best goalies the game has ever seen. Look for Martin Brodeur to continue his standout performances for many years to come.

CHRIS OSGOOD

Another 25 year old, Chris Osgood saw limited play in the post season with Detroit last year because of the stand-out play by veteran Mike Vernon, who led the Red Wings to the Stanley Cup. But the 5'10", 175 pound Osgood earned the title of No. 1 goalie during the regular season, putting



Martin Brodeur: Wise beyond his years in the net for the Devils.

up star-worthy statistics. With Vernon gone, he looks to reestablish himself as the budding superstar many predicted he would become.

With four seasons under his belt, Osgood is in the unfortunate position of playing under Scotty Bowman, the Red Wings coach who really doesn't care for him. Bowman elected to go with the veteran Vernon in the playoffs, and having won the Stanley Cup, few people question his decision. But insiders are well aware of Osgood's accomplishments last year, and they recognize that his play was one of the reasons Detroit was able to play with such confidence throughout the year.

Osgood posted a record of 23-13-9 in goal last year, with an impressive 6 shutouts and a 2.30 goals against average. While some may say that Detroit's defense would make anyone a star in the net, one only has to look at Osgood's save percentage (.910%) to

realize that he is the real deal.

With last year's tragic accident involving Vladimir Konstantinov, the Red Wings are surely going to be pressed to repeat as Stanley Cup Champions. But Chris Osgood is the goalie for Detroit this season, and that's some good news for Red Wings fans everywhere.

NIKOLAI KHABIBULIN

Okay, maybe his name doesn't roll off your tongue like some of the great ones. But Nikolai Khabibulin is quickly forcing everyone to take notice. The 24 year old Russian is establishing himself as one of the elite goaltenders in the NHL, and his stats last year rank him right up there with all the major stars in the net.

At 6'1" and 175 pounds, Khabibulin tied for second in the league in shutouts with 7, and his 2.83 goals

against average was more than impressive on a team like the Phoenix Coyotes. He is also a workhorse, playing in 72 games last year and recording an excellent .908% save percentage, while establishing a 30-33-6 record.

Perhaps most impressive about the Russian backstop is that he has great feet and is tremendously athletic on the ice. He is very adept at blocking low shots, and he likes to challenge the shot, which is something most Russian goalies are hesitant to do.

Khabibulin's stickhandling skills would make it difficult for anyone to confuse him with Martin Brodeur, and at times he can lapse into periods of inconsistency. But at just 24 years old, he has very few shortcomings that hurt him in front of the net. And since he seems to thrive on an abundance of playing time (he played in all but ten regular season games last year and didn't sit out a post season game) look for



Nikolai Khabibulin is fighting to establish himself as one of the very best Russian goalies in history.



Patrick Lalime is hoping to prove his rookie performance was not a fluke.

Khabibulin to keep getting better and better in the net as time goes by.

PATRICK LALIME

Everyone is aware of Patrick Lalime's sensational rookie campaign, when he set an NHL record with his 16 game unbeaten streak to start his career. But Lalime quickly lost five straight games for the Penguins in the net, and word was out that Lalime was not the Tiger Woods of hockey.

What many people didn't care to hear was that the 23 year old rookie was battling a serious case of the flu, and he never really got into the groove again in the second half of the season playing behind veteran Ken Wregget.

Lalime didn't see any playoff action with Pittsburgh last season, but he is determined to prove to the world that he was no fluke. Last year, he posted a 21-12-2 record, with an impressive .913% save percentage and a 2.94 goals against average. His 3 shutouts also contributed to the "buzz" associated with his rookie campaign.

Word around the league is that Lalime idolizes Patrick Roy, and some have accused him of copying Roy's unique butterfly style. At 6'2" and 170 pounds, Lalime is about the same size as Roy, but it's ridiculous to suggest that he is copying the legendary Colorado goaltender. It would be the equivalent of accusing a young pitcher in baseball of copying Nolan Ryan's fastball. If you've got the goods, you're going to use them, and Patrick Lalime definitely has the goods!

Still Lalime has to find a way to recapture his starting status with Pittsburgh and wrestle the slot away from Wregget. He has all the talent and size to emerge again as the phenomenon he teased Penguin fans with last year. All Lalime needs is the playing time.

JOCELYN THIBAUT

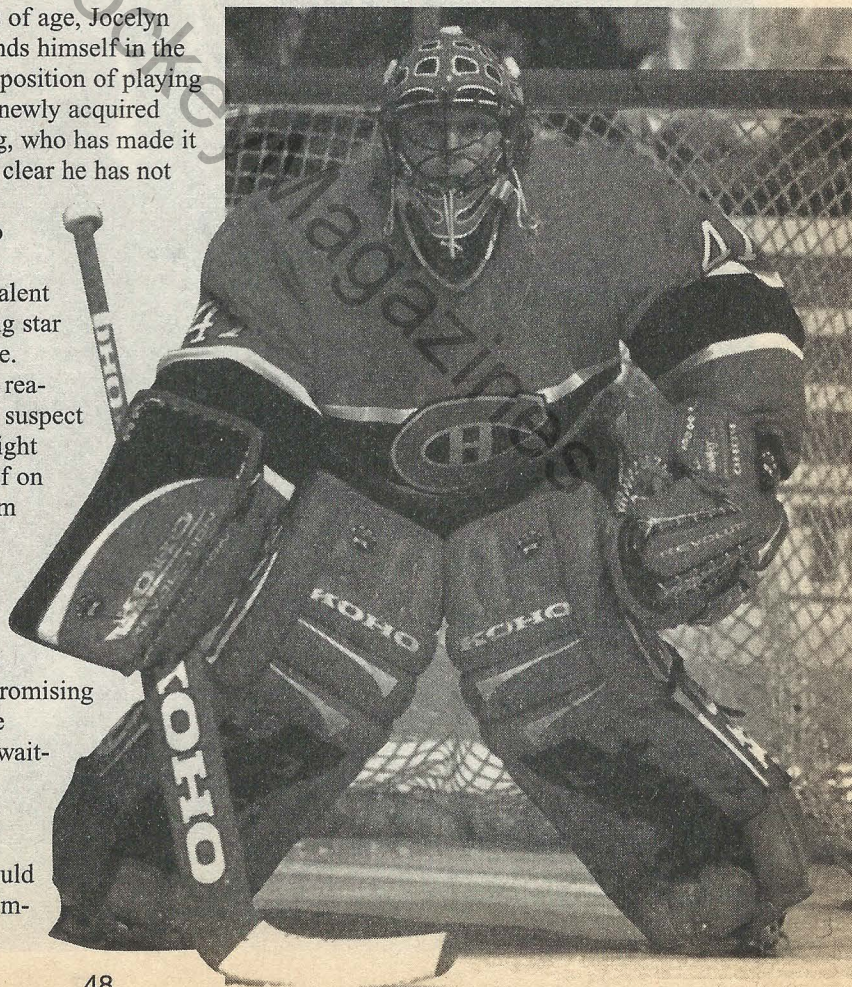
At 22 years of age, Jocelyn Thibault finds himself in the unenviable position of playing behind the newly acquired Andy Moog, who has made it abundantly clear he has not come to Montreal to "develop" Thibault's talent as promising star of the future.

For these reasons, many suspect Thibault might find himself on another team before the trade deadline, especially with another young, promising goalie (Jose Theodore) waiting in the wings. However, Thibault could also find him-

self on another team based on perceived personality problems. The 5'11", 170 pound Canadian did not help his cause last season by whining to the press about the lack of defensive support given to him by his teammates.

However, these factors do nothing to

It's only a matter of time before Jocelyn Thibault emerges as a superstar goalie in the NHL.



diminish the actual talent of Jocelyn Thibault the goaltender. Playing in 61 games last season, he managed a 2.90 goals against average, but more importantly, posted a .910% save percentage on a team which clearly had its share of defensive problems.

He has shown that can be extremely tough under pressure, and he is very mature for a goalie his age. He's got great reflexes and employs a better-than-average butterfly technique as well as a quick glove hand. Thibault would have to be considered the best backup goalie in the league should he stay in Montreal. But should the Habs send him packing, he is sure to quickly establish himself as an elite-level goaltender.

ERIC FICHAUD

Eric Fichaud is an exciting young goaltender who is trying to establish himself on a New York Islanders team that has more than its share of problems as well. Most importantly for Fichaud is that he continues to play backup for a goalie (Tommy Salo) who many believe is less talented than Fichaud.

Though his numbers are far from spectacular, Fichaud is capable of demonstrating spurts of talent that have hockey fans holding their breath in awe. In 34 games last year, he put up a 9-14-4 record with a save percentage of .899% and a goals against average of 3.10. He did not record a single shutout, but that doesn't seem to put a stop to the talk about Fichaud's potential as a star.

At 22 years of age, the 5'11", 165 pound netminder reminds many of Felix Potvin, with his extremely quick reflexes and mobility. He uses the butterfly style, but some point out that he is too quick to leave his feet and too slow to rise. However, he seems to be making progress in areas that have been, in the past, weaknesses for him, including puckhandling and gaining control of rebounds.

Still, Fichaud seems poised to overcome the problems of the Islanders franchise, and many expect he will soon emerge as the exciting goalie he has shown flashes of in the past two seasons.

Eric Fichaud has shown flashes of brilliance in the net as he fights for respect on his own team and around the league.



GRANT FUHR

Saving His Best for Last?

Grant Fuhr knows his days are numbered. At 35, the future Hall of Fame goaltender is struggling to make it back to the Stanley Cup for one final shot at glory, and the St. Louis Blues aren't making it easy for him. In two seasons, Fuhr has yet to win a playoff series.

Still, Fuhr is a relentless competitor, and though he may not be the goalie he was ten or even five years ago, he remains an essential part of the Blues' chemistry if they are ever going to win in the postseason.

In the last two years, Fuhr has played in 152 games and he shows no sign of slowing down. In fact, Fuhr is one of the few goalies who does not like to rest, believing he needs to keep active in order to maintain his consistent level of play. Some critics have pointed out that his

Age 35	HT 5-9	WT 190	Catches R	Seasons 17				
	GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA
96-97	73	33-27-11	4261	193	1940	.901	3	2.72
Career	748	353-250-98	42273	2452	20130	.878	20	3.48

lack of off-season conditioning has made it necessary that he "play into shape," and Fuhr even went so far as to hire a personal trainer to help him recover from reconstructive knee surgery in 1996. But few can argue with his work ethic and success once the season is underway.

Last year, the 5'9", 190 pound Fuhr was the fourth winningest netminder in the NHL, posting a 33-27-11 record with 3 shutouts and a 2.72 goals against average.

He has, at times, unbelievable balance, and though his reflexes have

slowed somewhat, he is still one of the very best reflex goalies in the history of hockey. He understands exactly how to control rebounds, and his recovery from first shots is still remarkable. His greatest asset in the net is probably his confidence and his coolness under pressure. He is never rattled, and this attitude actually lifts the play of his teammates.

After 17 seasons in the NHL, Grant Fuhr may not have many years left in him. But he can still teach even the elite goalies in the league a thing or two about goaltending.



It's no secret that Fuhr hates to train in the off-season, but no one questions his play under big game pressure.



MARTIN BRODEUR

The Devils' Superstar Is Just Reaching His Prime

At 25, Martin Brodeur is just coming into his prime as a goalie, which is bad news for the rest of the league. He is a relentless competitor with superb technical skills—a combination that can be more than frustrating to even the game's greatest offensive threats. His butterfly technique is among the best in hockey, he is extremely adept at positional play as well, and his stick-handling ability (he scored a goal in last year's playoffs) is unsurpassed.

It is no surprise that 6'1", 205 pound Brodeur led the NHL in goals-against average (1.88) and shutouts (10) last season. Some say that the reason his numbers are so impressive is because

he plays on a team that thrives on defense, and he merely benefits from

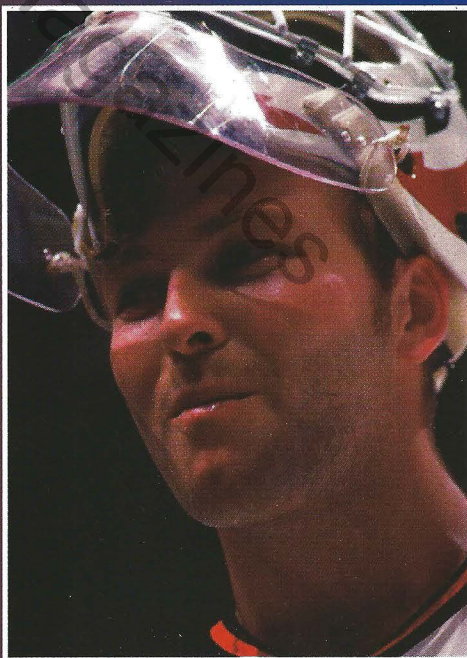
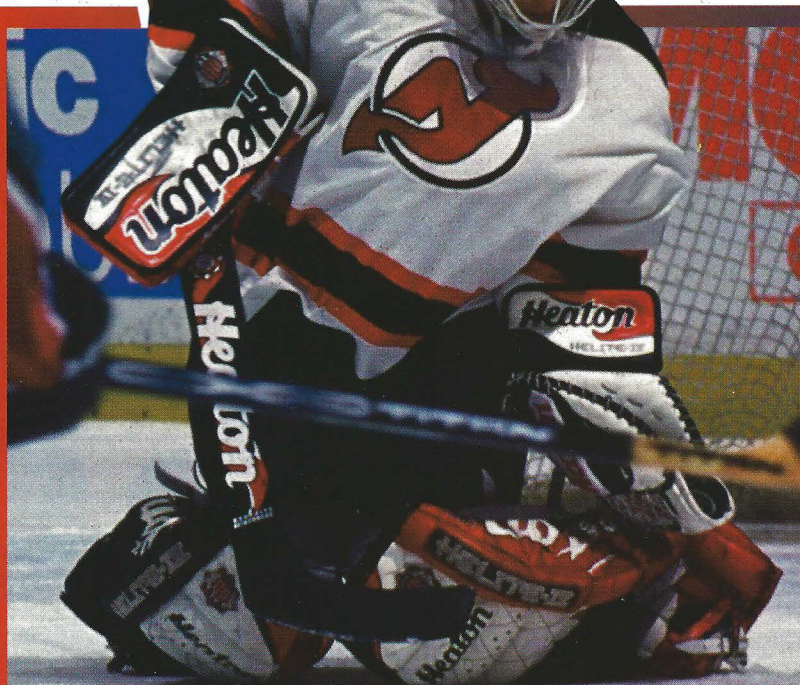
Age 25	HT 6-1	WT 205	Catches L	Seasons 5				
	GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA
96-97	67	37-14-13	3838	120	1633	.927	10	1.88
Career	235	119-67-39	13260	497	5818	.915	22	2.25

the Devils' aggressive defensive play. But no one can argue that Brodeur's shot-blocking skills are tremendous, and few doubt that he would be a superstar on even the lowliest teams in the NHL. The Vezina nominee was the first goalie since Bernie Parent to lead the league with a GAA under 2.00, and the legendary Ken Dryden was the last netminder to post more than 10 shutouts in a season.

Last year, Brodeur simmered as coach Jacques Lemaire attempted to rest him and give rookie Mike Dunham some playing time. Some have speculated that the

Devils merely wanted to give Dunham this playing time to prevent him from becoming an unrestricted free agent. Whatever the case may be, Brodeur was angry because he felt he needed the ice time himself to keep in fine tune in front of the net.

There's no doubt that the Devils' disappointing loss to the New York Rangers last year will motivate Brodeur in this year's playoffs—especially when many felt that the Rangers' goalie, Mike Richter outplayed him. Martin Brodeur is a proud goalie who thrives on competition, and nobody believes he has played in his last Stanley Cup championship.



Martin Brodeur is unsurpassed in both technique and pure athletic ability.



card

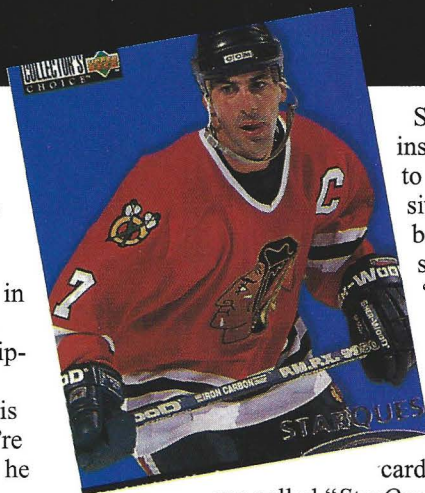
By
John T.
Browne

The Shakespearean Theory of Hockey

To speculate or not to speculate that is the question. Whether 'tis smarter to invest one's hard earned green backs in vintage hockey cards that have gained both their scarcity and value over the course of time, or in new cards whose value has been created by a manufacturer's manipulations. Two things are taking place right now: 1) Shakespeare is spinning in his grave and 2) You're probably saying what on earth is he talking about?

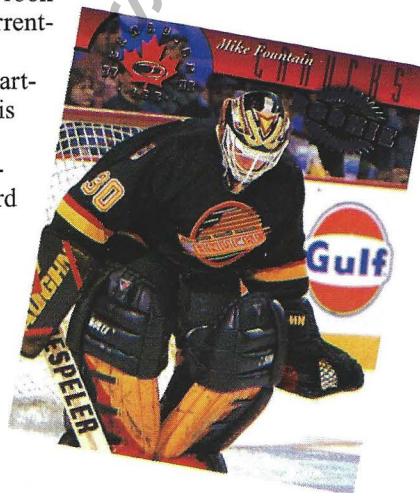
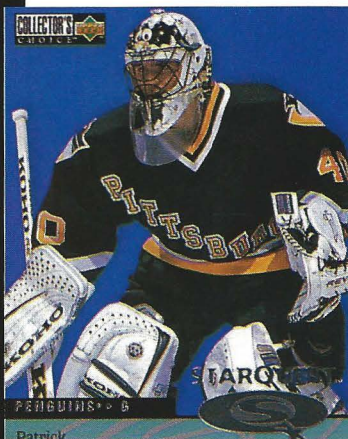
For a number of years now the card manufacturers have been using insert cards in an attempt to increase collector interest in their assorted products. An example of this would be the 13 card 1996-97 *Upper Deck Game Jersey* set. This set books for \$4,000.00, while the regular 390 card set only books for \$65.00. The Game Jersey cards were seeded 1 in every 2,500 packs, or 1 every 69 boxes,

making these cards an extremely tough pull. They came 36 packs to a box, with an average retail price of \$2.50 per pack. This means that if you were really unlucky, it could cost you \$6,250.00 for one of these cards which could turn out to be only a \$200.00 common. On the other hand, for only \$4,500.00, a near mint condition 1954-55 Topps set could be yours, with money left over. This, however, is a very extreme case and really doesn't prove anything one way or the other. The dollar amounts are too large, and are out of most collectors' financial reach.



So let's look at some inserts that are much easier to pull and far less expensive. For this comparison between vintage and new sets, use Upper Deck "Collector's Choice 1997 Hockey". These packs contain an insert card set that has four different parallel versions of the same

card. The cards in this set are called "StarQuest". The 4-star version of the "StarQuest" insert is found on average once in every 145 packs, or in every fourth box. Again, let's assume a worst case scenario, and you go through all 4 boxes before you manage to pull one of the desired cards. Your final cost would be approximately \$128.00. Kind of steep considering you could now be the proud owner of a "not worth the price of the paper its printed on" common. What other options do you and your \$128.00 have? You might consider looking at some vintage cards from the early-to-mid-80's. Patrick Roy's rookie card can be found in the Topps 1986-87 set, and is booking for \$110.00. Not a bad start so far, you still have \$18.00 left in your pocket. Moving to the defensive line, we have Ray Bourque's 1980-81 O-Pee-Chee rookie card, also currently booking for \$110.00. His partner on defense is Paul Coffey's 1981-82 O-Pee-Chee rookie card – now booking for \$90.00. So far, every card selected is that of a future hall of famer, and all of them have cost you



less than what you could wind up paying for a 4-Star "StarQuest" insert card. Our choices At forward, Steve Yzerman's O-Pee-Chee 1984-85 rookie card can be found for \$80.00; Brendan Shanahan's rookie card can be found in the 1988-89 O-Pee-Chee set, and is currently listed at \$60.00; Mike Gartner's rookie card is now booking for \$50.00 and can also be found in the 1980-81 O-Pee-Chee set.

Insert cards are used by the card manufacturers to move a product quickly before their next issue hits the market. Proof of this is in the number of different hockey products that they print. In 1996, for example, Donruss put out three different hockey sets: the 240-card Donruss set had seven different insert sets which totaled another 310 cards. Their "Canadian Ice" set was 150 cards, with four insert sets, that added another 326 cards. Finally, the "Donruss Elite" set has 150 base cards and five different insert sets. These inserts totaled 209 cards. This means that in 1996, Donruss inserted over 1,102,000 insert cards, some of these were parallel sets of the base set. Consider how many boxes of these products had to be printed in order to hide all of those inserts. Donruss is by no means the only culprit involved in this scam. In fact, hockey card collectors can count themselves lucky the latest rip-off being used on baseball card collectors has not made the transition to hockey. The Flair "Showcase Legacy" cards have a "Masterpiece" insert card, limited to only one parallel card for each of the cards in the set. A New Jersey dealer recently sold one of the Frank Thomas "Masterpiece" cards for \$8,300.00. These cards are without a doubt the toughest

insert to pull that has ever been forced on a hobby.

Another problem with insert cards is that they just do not hold their value from year to year. For example, I made a trip to a local card show where I found the 1994-95 Upper Deck "Electric Ice" cards of Mario Lemieux, Wayne Gretzky, and Patrick Roy. All together these cards have a book value of \$150.00, however, this trio of All-Star inserts was available for only \$50.00. Were these inserts over priced to begin with, or have the insert collectors moved on to this years newest insert? At this same show, however, while I was able to find tons of assorted insert cards from every one of the card manufacturers, the five vintage cards mentioned previously in this article were not to be found at any price. Although, I did come across five very nice Roger Maris rookie cards, but

that's a different article.

My feeling is always to go with the vintage card, and if you must have that insert card, well just wait a while. I'll bet the value of whatever insert you're looking for will drop, just like the three "Electric Ice" cards. You'll find that the idea of waiting is not a bad one for all new products,

no matter what the sport. For the most part, you'll see the price drop as dealers need to raise cash for whatever new product is coming out next.

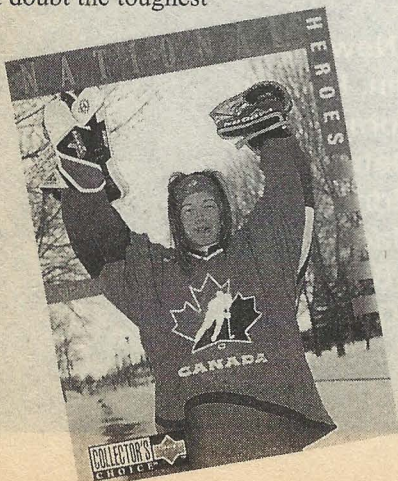
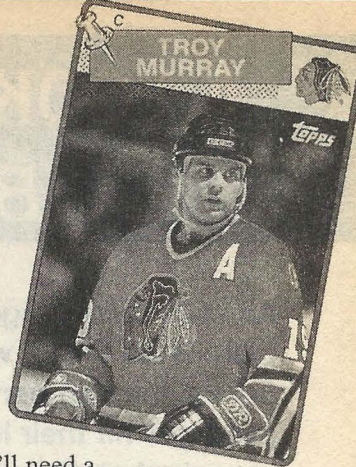
Now that your ready to race out of your house in order to buy some older cards, lets try and save you about \$400.00 by listing the counterfeit variations of the Mario Lemieux 1985-86 O-Pee-Chee rookie card. First, on the back of the card, the ascender on the small "h" in the word "his" is missing. Making it look like a small letter "n". On the front, the black border around his picture and name is not solid, but rather appears to be a series of dashes. A second version has a blurred Penguins logo in the upper right hand corner, as well as a blurring of his name. On the third counterfeit, you have to check out the stats on the back of the card. The dot pattern on a real Lemieux card is diagonal, any thing

else is a fake. Lemieux's '87-'88 and '88-'89 cards have also been targeted by counterfeiters. Again, you should check the dot patterns for blurring, you'll need a jewelers loop in order to properly check these cards. Lemieux is rapidly approaching Michael Jordan status in world of counterfeiting, so be very careful before you purchase one of these bad boys.

While your strolling around the local card show, here are some cards we recommend you look for: first, try card #24 from the 1983-84 O-Pee-Chee set. This cardboard gem has both Mark Messier and Wayne Gretzky on the same card. It could have been a fantastic card if both had finished their careers on the same team. It's still a great addition to any collection. Next the 1990-91 O-Pee-Chee Premier set. This 132 card set is loaded with great rookies, including Jaromir Jagr and Sergei Federov, and it's priced right. However, be careful of Jagr and Federov counterfeits. Finally try finding the 1986-87 Topps set. It's a 132 card set that has the rookie cards of John Vanbiesbrouck and Patrick Roy as well as Mario Lemieux's second year card. This Topps issue has all of the major cards found in the O-Pee-Chee version but at better than half the cost.

It's a real shame how ugly the McDonald's hockey cards have become since Pinnacle took over production in 1996. These cards were originally produced by Upper Deck, who turned out a solid if not overly spectacular card. This year it would seem that Pinnacle skipped on quality control. Check out card # 20 which depicts Brian Leetch of The New York Rangers, a teammate delivering a body check to a member of The Mighty Ducks, and if you look under Leetch's right arm you'll see an unknown Canadiens player. Giving new meaning to the term two on one.

Remember the words of the immortal bard, "Lay on, MacDuff, And damned be him that first cries 'Hold! Enough!' for I have thee Gretzky."



A LOOK AT THE STATS THAT COUNT

— BEFORE THEY DISAPPEAR!

As save percentages continue to rise and goals against averages continue to decline, there is no telling what will happen when the NHL undergoes expansion in 1998-99. Surely, the number of shutouts will rise, as will save percentages, while goals against averages hit their lowest numbers ever. With that in mind, here's a look at the most important statistics for goalies-as of the season's start:



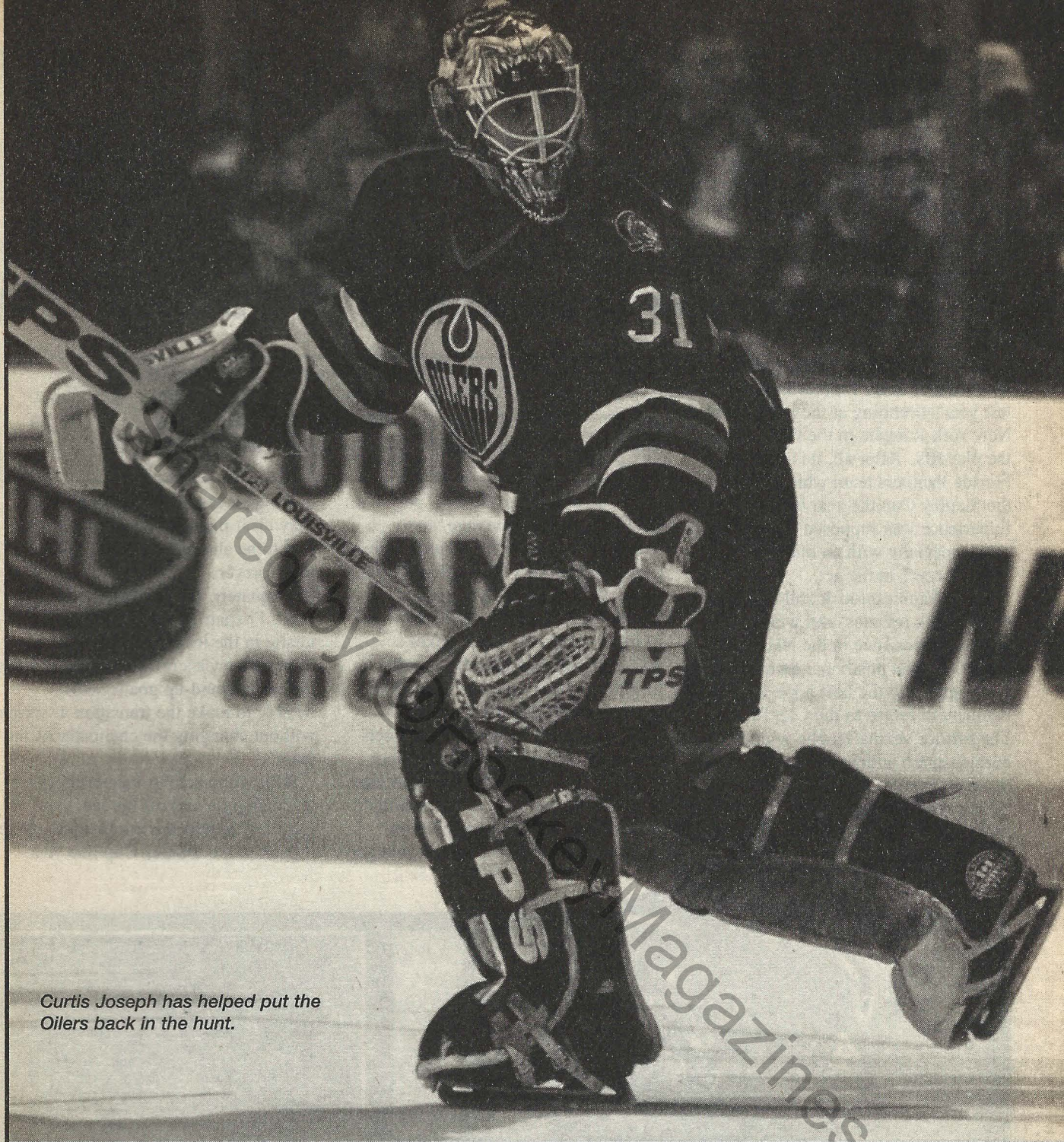
Chris Osgood isn't looking over his shoulder at Vernon this season.

Wins

Patrick Roy, Colorado	38
Dominik Hasek, Buffalo	37
Martin Brodeur, New Jersey	37
Mike Richter, NY Rangers	33
Grant Fuhr, St. Louis	33
Curtis Joseph, Edmonton	32
Ron Hextall, Philadelphia	31
Nikolia Khabibulin, Phoenix	30
Guy Hebert, Anaheim	29
Andy Moog, Dallas	28

Shutouts

Martin Brodeur, New Jersey	10
Nikolai Khabibulin, Phoenix	7
Patrick Roy, Colorado	7
Chris Osgood, Detroit	6
Curtis Joseph, Edmonton	6
Ron Hextall, Philadelphia	5
Dominik Hasek, Buffalo	5
Rick Tabaracci, Cgy/TB	5
Tommy Salo, NY Islanders	5



Curtis Joseph has helped put the Oilers back in the hunt.

Goals Against Average (Min. 25 Games)

Martin Brodeur, New Jersey	1.88
Andy Moog, Dallas	2.15
Jeff Hackett, Chicago	2.16
Dominik Hasek, Buffalo	2.27
John Vanbiesbrouck, Florida	2.29
Chris Osgood, Detroit	2.30
Patrick Roy, Colorado	2.32
Mark Fitzpatrick, Florida	2.36
Mike Vernon, Detroit	2.43
Garth Snow, Philadelphia	2.52

Save Percentage (Min. 25 Games)

Dominik Hasek, Buffalo	.930
Jeff Hackett, Chicago	.927
Martin Brodeur, New Jersey	.927
Patrick Roy, Colorado	.923
Guy Hebert, Anaheim	.919
John Vanbiesbrouck, Florida	.919
Mike Richter, NY Rangers	.917
Mark Fitzpatrick, New Jersey	.914
Sean Burke, Hartford	.914
Patrick Lalime, Pittsburgh	.913

JOHN VANBIESBROUCK

To Return to the Cup Finals, the Panthers Are Depending on "The Beezer"

No one could have been more disappointed than John Vanbiesbrouck after last year's drubbing at the hands of the New York Rangers in the first round of the playoffs. After all, this was a Florida Panthers team which went to the Stanley Cup the year before. Experience was supposed to be on their side, especially with an old pro like "The Beezer" in the net.

At 34, Vanbiesbrouck still has lightning-quick reflexes, and with 15 years of experience in the NHL, he is one of the best positional netminders in the league, and the best hope for the Panthers to return to the Cup finals. The former Vezina Trophy winner boasts superb anticipation and confidence in front of the net, and he has always been one of the toughest goalies to beat in a breakaway.

Age 34	HT 5-9	WT 172	Catches L	Seasons 15				
	GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA
96-97	57	27-19-10	3347	128	1582	.919	2	2.29
Career	657	288-256-76	37432	1959	19130	.898	25	3.14

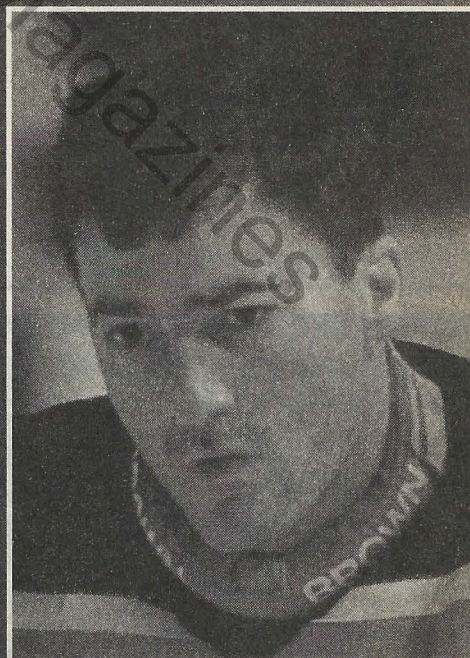
Last season, "The Beezer" posted a 2.29 goals-against average, and recorded 2 shutouts for a Panthers team that gave him very little offensive support. At 5'9" and 172 pounds, Vanbiesbrouck can not rely on his size in front of the net, so he makes up for it with a technically superb inverted-V technique and more than competent stickhandling ability.

The one thing the Panthers are certainly not comfortable talking about is that the superstar goalie is well into his prime years. And for a netminder like Vanbiesbrouck who relies on quick reflexes more than the younger

and bigger goalies in the league, it is very clear the team does not expect him to be able to continue his superb play forever.

Fortunately, the Panthers have, in Mark Fitzpatrick, the best backup goalie in the league, and in Vanbiesbrouck's reflexes begin to slow, the taller, stand-up goalie will be able to make the transition to starter without changing the chemistry of the team.

Still, without John Vanbiesbrouck's leadership on and off the ice, the Florida Panthers are not likely to make it back to the Stanley Cup this year.



Are the Panthers relying too much on Vanbiesbrouck to return them to the Cup finals?



DAREN PUPPA



Daren Puppia appears to have recovered nicely from major back surgery last year, and he also seems to have recovered his 1995-96 form when he was voted Lightning MVP and earned a Vezina nomination. One of the league's largest goalies, the 6'3", 205 pound veteran has maintained a 3.04 goals against average throughout his career, but has been much stingier to opposing teams in recent years. If Puppia can stay healthy, he's a big part of Tampa Bay's

STEPHANE Fiset



Stephane Fiset shows flashes of brilliance that have to have fans of the Los Angeles Kings shaking their heads in bewilderment. Last season, the 27 year old, 8 year NHL veteran put up numbers that were very mediocre (13-24-5 record, 3.19 goals against average) while playing on a very mediocre team. Yet Fiset had a spectacular second half of the season which turned heads all over the league, and now he's fighting to establish himself as a goaltender who truly belongs in the NHL.



PATRICK ROY

The Ultimate Money Goaltender

To those who have ever wondered how Patrick Roy gets away with all that cockiness, the answer is quite simple: Patrick Roy is the most successful playoff goalie in NHL history.

He gets away with it because he understands that winning is the ultimate bottom line in hockey, and no one is more competitive than the Colorado Avalanche goaltender.

Last season, Roy set his career high in wins with 38, and nearly carried the Avalanche on his shoulders all the way to the Stanley Cup finals again. His magnificent play against Detroit in the Western Conference Finals prevented a total blowout by the eventual champion Red Wings.

Roy also posted seven shutouts, second only to Martin Brodeur, and he was fourth in save percentage at .923.

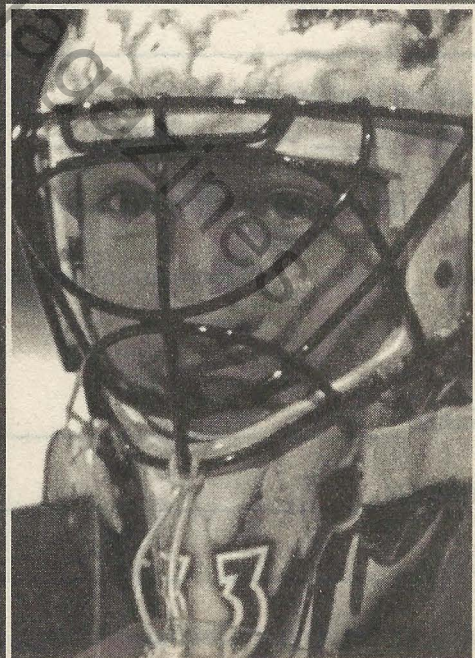
Age 32	HT 6-0	WT 192	Catches L	Seasons 13				
	GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA
96-97	62	38-15-7	3698	143	1861	.923	7	2.32
Career	652	349-205-74	37921	1722	18350	.906	37	2.72

With a quick glove and superb technical control of his butterfly style, the 6'0", 192 pound netminder simply does not allow many dangerous rebounds. But more importantly, Roy has the confidence and the ability to carry a team and inspire his teammates to play at their highest level.

Patrick Roy is also no stranger to controversy. Last year, he battled it out with 5'9" Mike Vernon of Detroit in the Stanley Cup, and he does not hide the fact that Sandis Ozolinsh, Colorado's offensive-minded defenseman, drives him crazy on the ice.

Still, with three Stanley Cup rings, Roy is able to rally his team around him when the chips are down, and his experience at winning is a tremendous boost of confidence to the Avalanche.

If Colorado can stay healthy toward the end of the season, look for Patrick Roy to once again hoist the Avalanche atop his shoulders and carry them all the way to the Stanley Cup finals.



With three Stanley Cup rings, Patrick Roy doesn't need to explain his cocky behavior to anyone.

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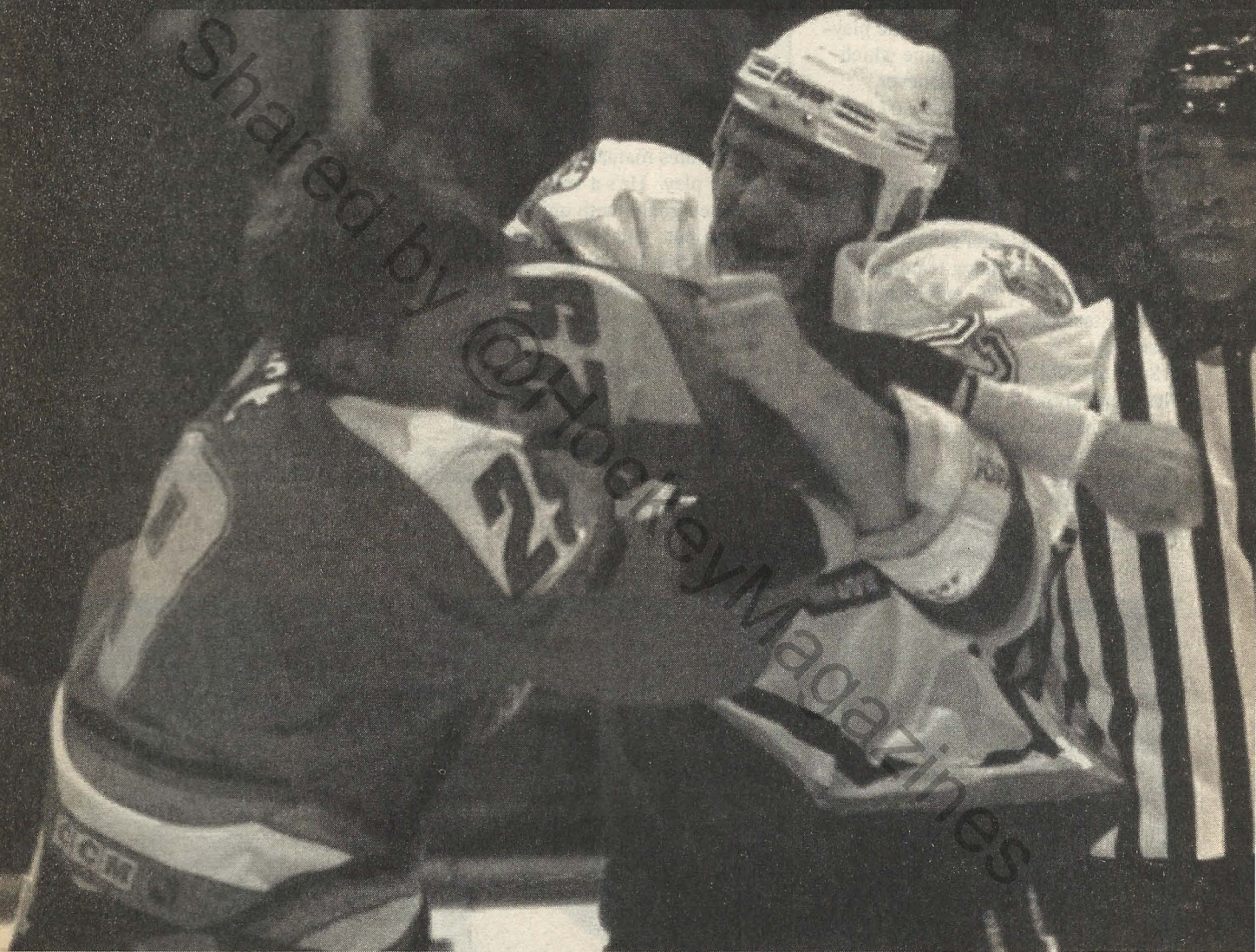
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GUY HEBERT

The Duck Stops Pucks Here

Guy Hebert had a career year in 1996-97 and was one of the main reasons the Mighty Ducks made it to the playoffs. In spite of a second line which gave him no support whatsoever, Hebert posted a career best 2.67 goals-against average and managed to record four shutouts.

At 30 years old, Hebert is just coming into his prime as a goalie. He served as Mike Richter's backup on the U.S. World Cup winning team last during the summer of '96, and he made the All Star team for the first time last year.

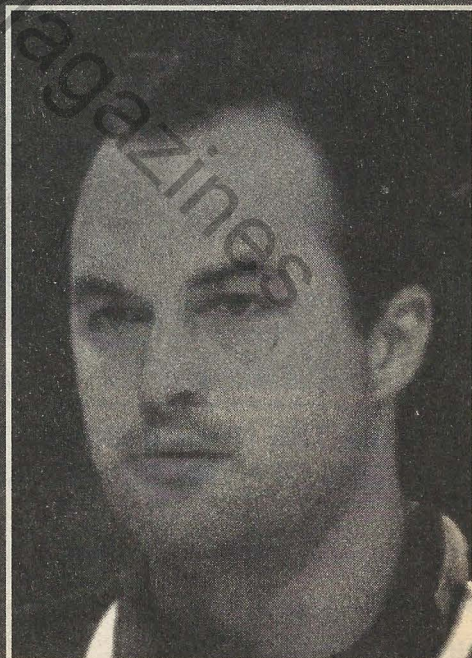
Still, the 5'11", 185 pound American knows he's going to have to continue to improve in order to reach the elite level of NHL goaltenders.

Age 30	HT 5-11	WT 185	Catches L	Seasons 6				
	GPI	W-L-T	MIN	GA	SHA	SV%	SO	GAA
96-97	67	29-25-12	3863	172	2133	.919	4	2.67
Career	254	102-108-27	14220	689	7621	.910	13	2.91

Hebert is adept at stand-up play, and demonstrates maturity beyond his years at angle play. He's a very patient and composed goalie with quick reflexes and fast feet. But Hebert appears weak at times while handling the puck, and he tends to sit back too deep in the net when he could be more aggressive.

Word around the NHL is that Hebert is going to need more support from his fellow Ducks. Though Anaheim considers itself a defensive-minded team, the Ducks' defense was clearly a problem, leading to an overabundance of shot attempts against Hebert last season.

Originally from Troy, NY, Hebert is now in his seventh season in the NHL. He has the potential to become one of the game's great netminders, and many believe he will soon supplant Richter as the premiere American goalie. Last year, Hebert showed tremendous fortitude and character in a toughly fought series with the eventual Stanley Cup champion Detroit Red Wings, and his performance in that series may well give him the confidence he needs to place him among hockey's superstar goalies.



Guy Hebert didn't get much support from his fellow Ducks last season, but still managed to have a career year.



TOMMY SALO



Tommy Salo has struggled to keep his No.1 goalie status with the New York Islanders. He's one of the hardest working goaltenders in the league, and at 26 years of age, he's got his work cut out for him by having to constantly prove himself with phenom goalie Eric Fichaud forever waiting in the wings. However, if he continues to post impressive numbers (2.82 goals against average, 5 shutouts, and a .904% save percentage last year) while playing on a struggling team, Salo will keep the younger Fichaud's starting dreams on hold.

KEN WREGGET



Ken Wregget is one of the most dependable goalies in the NHL who never seems to capture No. 1 status. Despite injuries last year to a hamstring and a shoulder, the 15 year veteran still managed to post a .902% save percentage with two shutouts in 46 games played. While Pittsburgh is dreaming of Patrick Lalime stepping up to claim the starting job, Wregget simply does what he has to do in the crease to put those dreams on hold.

DAMIAN RHODES



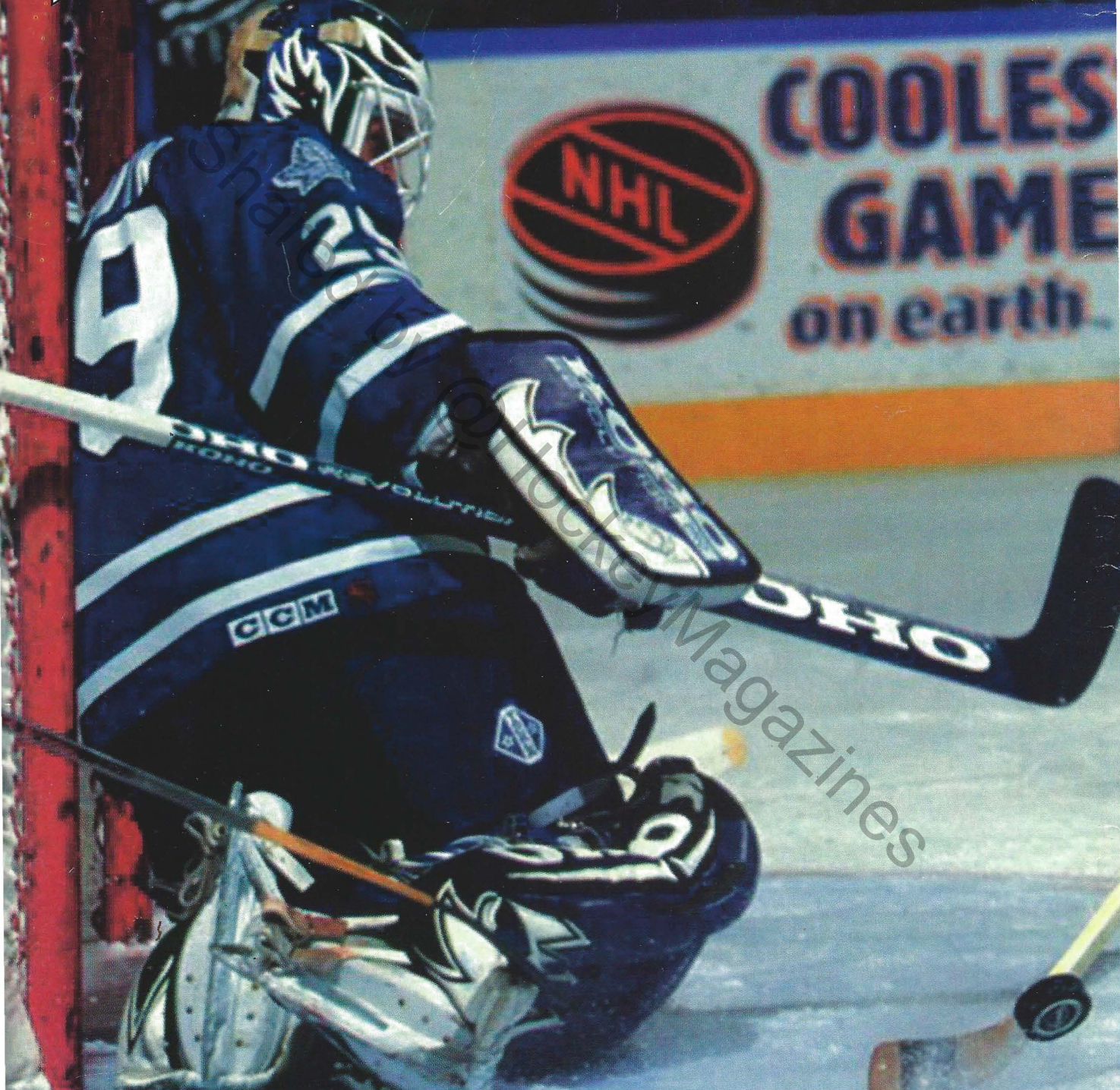
No one is really sure about Damian Rhodes. Was he simply riddled with injuries last season, or was the competition for No. 1 goalie with Ron Tugnutt the reason he was out of action so often down the stretch? Rhodes is determined to play through the pain this season, which should enable him to prove to everyone that he deserves full time playing status with Ottawa.

OLAF KOLZIG



Olaf Kolzig has never seemed to break away from the backup goalie label, and at age 27, some wonder if he ever will make it to No. 1 status. But with Bill Ranford playing in front of him, Kolzig certainly sees his share of playing time, and it's no surprise that his numbers are better than Ranford's. In fact, the South African played in just 29 games for the Capitals

FELIX POTVIN



Felix Potvin is coming off his worst year yet in the NHL, where he went 74 games without a shutout, and gave up 3.15 goals a game. But "The Cat" is just 26 years old with incredible reflexes, and he seems to thrive on the challenge of facing breakaways. Potvin is going to need a little help from the Maple Leafs if he wants to stand out as one of the league's best goaltenders. But he has more than enough talent, and with 6 years of NHL experience, Potvin should be coming into his own soon.